

Sick To Move

Volume 3, Number 0, Free

Interviews. Reviews. And other shit
for those who missed it the first time.



"I mean, that's what punk rock was always about to me - the
communication ..."

Matt Freeman



"He took beatings from the best in the business.

But he never stayed down for ten."

- Nelson Algren

It is a universal concept, and usually a fatal flaw - going back one last time. It is more risky than rewarding. Only rarely does it end well. I thought, after the last issue and the resulting problems, I was done. I said my piece, fought the good fight and stood up for what I believed in. I took my blows, got in a few of my own and managed to walk away on my own two feet. And isn't that the way it's supposed to end?

Not in my world.

In my world, the fight doesn't stop. The war never ends. Enemies don't become friends. Peace is a myth and resistance is the only way to stay alive in any meaningful way. The battlefield changes. The goal is the same - actualization. It's a struggle that continues, no matter how tired, battered or bloody I may be.

I had stopped doing STM. This compilation issue exists due to a suggestion from Ugly Lenny. It was slated to be the final issue, until a trip to Japan with tiltWheel reminded me that good things are always going on in punk. I just have to look harder to find them in the wake of punk's commercial success. So there's a new issue that accompanies this one. You can find out more about that issue in its pages. And there will be more to come.

You're holding an arbitrary collection of the best odds and sods that passed through the photocopier as STM. When I can still quote reviews that people wrote years ago, they deserve to see the light of day again because lately, I can't remember shit.

Over the years, STM has meant more to me than I can explain. It started as something that got me out of bed after a serious illness. It continued as a way to kick ideas around in a less restricting form than journalism.

It has been my counselor and confidante, a mirror showing me what I admired about myself and what I wanted to change. It was always there, whether I was breaking up, breaking down or just plain broken.

It's been almost six years since the first issue. It's been almost four years since the most

recent one. In those four years, I've gone through relationships, jobs, cars, apartments and too many funerals.

One of those relationships resulted in an engagement. My ex-fiancee married the guy she was having an affair with on the same day that she and I were supposed to wed. I'm not sure whether I should be offended that I wasn't invited to the ceremony. One more bridge burns, one less thing holds me back. In every way, it's a relief.

I have tried to sum up my feelings about these events in various ways. None of them are adequate. Words cannot communicate meanings wide enough to cover these blues. So, although it may seem cold, listing these events has to suffice. From that, I ask you to consider how tragedies add up - one and one do not equal two; they compound and become three. One and one and one do not equal three; they are closer to six. And so on. It is a curious form of mathematics, but the calculations of the soul are never easy.

I feel like I'm through it now. It's the same sensation as entering a long tunnel, driving for miles and getting used to flashes of sodium light glinting off tile, then emerging, blinking and sunblind, into daylight.

One thing is certain - I don't plan on going underground again until I'm dead.

Appreciations and Dedications:

For Tim Blood, who rolled out like Chow Yun Fat in a Chinese restaurant when the evil forces of orthodoxy threatened. Words are too limited to convey the extent of my gratitude. For Philip, my co-defendant/brother in arms. For Alex, one of the best men I'll ever know. For Quinn and everything he does that people don't know about.

For A.C., Mandy, Kali and everyone else who was there when hard times knocked.

For Lenny and Jennifer, and everyone else who inspired me to do STM again.

For Dave Smalley and all the people with strong hearts who still fly the flag.

And for those who are no longer with us.

and losing. The point isn't so much that it was a losing game, but that I kept playing and didn't give up. I'm almost at the end of it now - pretty much all that remains is ash, empty bottles, cigarettes left burning as I walked away. Alex and I always raised our glasses to 1997, the year, we noted, that wouldn't kill us. It may be the worst year on record for me, but every tragedy travels with hope as a companion.

Median.

Sitting quietly in the middle. Long months stretch on, no end in sight. Sometimes it seems like it's the 32nd of June or the 45th of October. I know these walls, their cracks, their crenellated paint. I can pass the time any way I want. I can smoke in bed and stare at the ceiling. I can sit on the couch and anesthetize myself with television. I can go for walks in the middle of the night and no one wakes up and asks where I'm going. I can eat cereal for dinner. And this is being single. It's leaving clothes where they fall. It's letting dishes sit in the sink. It's not doing laundry every week. And this is my life. I remember the route but I still don't know how I got here. And I don't know why I stay. My finger traces highways on a map - escape routes, every one. This is a life of quiet desperation, of choking back screams and gagging on the bitter taste. And I'm tired of biting my tongue. Blood like copper in my mouth, on my lips.

Something like a life.

There's a stillness in this place. It's a curious silence that only manifests itself in the finality of absence. I have known it twice in my life - after my mother's suicide and my fiancée's betrayal. Voices and words cannot penetrate its opacity; it is pervasive. It is something like a wall, shielding emptiness, nothingness, quiet desperation. I feel it moving with me, invisible. It does not protect me; it only separates me, like an invisible line over which I may not step. It makes me feel as though I only have a semblance of the existence that was formerly mine. It makes me feel as though I only possess something like a life. Of course I'm angry about it. I have every right to be. I once felt like my life had finally stabilized; that, like a gyroscope, it had reached equilibrium. I had lost my family. I had lost my lover. I had lost friends. Some would say I nearly lost my mind. Finally, things were approaching normal. I had stopped drinking and smoking. I had begun to remember who I was. I was engaged. And then everything fell apart again. I discovered my fiancée had been having an affair since a month after I proposed. The mirror fractured, splintering a reflection I was just beginning to recognize again. So is it really so unusual that I can scarcely identify myself? The scars that were once part of my skin seem alien and removed from my past. I question whether my face is mine; it looks much older and more world-weary than the one I knew. I used to feel young at heart and free. Now I feel as though I have walked for miles and still have leagues to go to reach a destination that I haven't identified yet. It's a journey which currently seems purposeless. If I learned one thing from the shoddy scholarship lumped together under the banner of postmodernism, it is this - anything may be taken apart and made anew. Although this theory was once used to destroy, who is to say that it is beyond redemption? Who is to say that it may only be used to tear down the past, leaving nothing behind but splinters and shards of glass? Who is to say that in examining the parts and replacing them that something equally wondrous may not result? Deconstruction is only valuable in what its peripheries suggest, in what lies beyond the boundaries described by inferior and jealous imaginations. It is only valuable in suggesting that we may repair the damage we have done; that what you and I once tore apart can be renewed with careful hands. I have to break with my past. It has been a long and painful process so far; from here, it will only get harder. I find myself standing alone on unfamiliar ground, unable to see the way back, unable to see myself. I can see glimpses of the person I once was - I can see the tattered remnants of fear, uncertainty and anger fluttering in the blast furnace breeze of the desert. And in the shimmering heat rising off the sand ahead, I can see who I will be. I know better than to dismiss this as a mirage; it feels too right to be another illusion. The boundaries are undefined, the path is unmarked and the distance is unknown. I feel as though I lost my shoes long ago, leaving my feet to be scorched by the sun-baked dunes, and have no choice but to keep walking or die of thirst where I stand. I refuse to give up. I refuse to give in. I refuse to believe that this semblance of a life is all that I will ever have and I can't understand why anyone would tell me that I should get used to this and accept it. I know there's something better ahead and though it may be out of reach now, it won't always be that way. And when I finally find what I'm seeking, I won't let go.

some donated, others consigned to the dustbin of memories. Now it's like she was never here. All she left behind are lingering fears, loneliness and worry.

Strawberry wine.

I drove by my old house today. Figured it was best to do it while I was sick so I wouldn't ruin a good mood. Whoever moved in painted it, ripped out all the juniper bushes. They've got kids, that much I'm sure of, elseways they wouldn't have jimcracky skeletons hanging askew in the windows I used to look out of when I was waiting for my dad to come home. I meant to drive slow, but I wound up going faster because it isn't my house anymore. It's nothing to me anymore. I've started calling this apartment home, as poor a reflection of the word as it is. It's a roof. A kitchen. A place to hang my coat and sleep. Shower and shave. It's a place where I can read. I guess that makes it home. I just wish it didn't feel so goddamn lonely; a home shouldn't feel like there are ghosts in every corner.

Last exit on yesterday.

I used to find faith in my security, in the belief that I always had a safety net. It offered the luxury of nearly absolute freedom. Now I'm 24 and feeling the pressure most people have felt over a period of years, condensed into weeks. Suicide, job hunting, relocation, making survival plans. Dealing with calls that put more pressure on me, some from genuine worry, others from ignorance. I thought I could see the future. I thought I could beat the system and help people out, doing it my way without succumbing to the modern world, to the corporate world. I've had to compromise. I work for a multinational corporation; I have for almost a year. I recently took a second job working for an attorney service. It makes paying rent easier, but now I have to find a place to live. There's so much pressure that I feel like if I stop to think, it will all come crashing down. So I drink and smoke. I listen to music. The songs are starting to make sense again. Not long ago, it seemed I could only write about my situation and grief and self-loathing. Maybe I just didn't want to confront what had actually happened, that I preferred to ponder the state of my romantic entanglements because I could try to resolve those. I could speak my mind and get reactions, whereas the other problems were not nearly as responsive. Confronting my mother meant driving to Point Loma and screaming at a white marble marker in a cemetery wall. It meant coming to terms with things I'm simply not ready to fight yet.

You can feel bad if it makes you feel better.

Thanksgiving Day. I figured today would be hard, probably tougher than any other day this year except Christmas. These days are rarely good for me. I assumed today would be bleak and depressing since I had been having a rough week. People had extended invitations to join them for the holiday, but I was in a foul mood and didn't want to subject them to my company. I had a great time at a concert after being depressed, and slipped back into depression just as quickly, yet I have been happy this week. Monday night when I went out drinking with a friend and we quoted song lyrics to each other. Wednesday morning when I wandered through a downpour, getting soaked and chilled to the bone. Last night, when I went over to her apartment with three bottles of wine and we talked until this afternoon. I thought I'd have a horrible day; instead I woke up tangled around her and vice versa. Instead, I woke up with her hair in my mouth from sharing the same pillow and her kitten at my feet, and my arms wrapped around her. I feel at ease, like the world is the way it should be. Once again, I'm struck by how fate happens, how it makes things happen exactly when they should, when people most need them, and how every time it seems that I simply can't go on, that I've been hit too many times to get up again to take more blows, that fate intervenes. I sometimes feel like I passed my second wind years ago, that the only breaths I have left are borrowed at a very high interest rate that I can't hope to repay. Then I have nights like last night, nights that remind me that I'm human, that the person I'm with is human, that we've all been hurt in such profound ways that it sometimes seems we can never heal or regain the innocence we lost. Sometimes. Then I think about the finger touching my arm, the lips grazing my finger, the person I'm wrapped around. That's usually when I realize that while dreams are sustenance, they are frequently less delicious than the reality they represent, than the desires they reveal to us. Dreams nurse us through times when reality simply isn't enough to pull us through. Sometimes though, reality transcends what we dream and imagine. It's rare, but it happens. It's almost miraculous how fate rolls the dice for us and gives them a little extra tip when they're on the verge of coming up snake eyes. This year, it seemed like I kept rolling the dice

Sick To Move

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Bastard of Young

Scott Puckett

Legal Assassin

Tim Blood

Cover Illustration

Mike Clift

Contributors

Rossi Beaucoup, Philip Dawdy, Adam Hauck,

Kali, Tom Parker, Dave Quinn, Alex Thiesen

Contributors Emeritus

Professor Tom Donahue, Josh E.,

Dave Griepsma, Sean Guillory, Kenny Leck,

Eric Rife, Eric Woodside

Made under the influence of:

The Dragons, New Order, Guided by Voices, The Clash, face to face, Chet Baker, Texas Is the Reason, Manic Street Preachers, Fuel, Lifetime, Pulley, Chavez, Knapsack, Down By Law, Dag Nasty, Pegboy, Elliott, Cap'n Jazz, tiltWheel, No Knife, Hüsker Dü, Furious IV, Saint Etienne, The Replacements, Screaming Fat Rat, The Urchin, the Weakerthans, American Heartbreak, Hot Water Music, Avail, American Steel, Ann Beretta, In My Eyes and the Anti-Matter comp.

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For Billie Puckett, 1939-1997.

For Bircha Yapple, 1916-1997.

Raise your glasses high, motherfuckers. It's last call and we haven't even begun to wake the dead with our toasting. Cheers to you, to me and to tomorrow.

email: puckett@crash.cts.com

snail mail: P.O. Box 121462

San Diego, CA 92112-1462

web: <http://www.punkrockacademy.com>

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How to DIY:

Do your own music by Kenny Leck (The Neighbors)

Do your own zine

Do your own distro by Sean Guillory (Primordial Soup Kitchen)

How to offend people at your own funeral
by Kali

Reviews

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Words to Remember

"Even the death of friends will inspire us as much as their lives. ... Their memories will be encrusted over with sublime and pleasing thoughts, as monuments of other men are overgrown with moss; for our friends have no place in the graveyard." Henry David Thoreau

"All I want is for a voice to come out of the wilderness and the stereo to crackle in flames like the burning bush. I don't want to have to ask, 'Are you talking to me?' I want to know. And then I want to dance." Ariel Swartley

"There's something inside of every man that keeps him going long after he has any reason to. He's no good to life and life is no good to him, and he knows it will always be that way. But still he can't quit. Something keeps prodding him, whispering to him - making him hope in the face of hopelessness. Making him believe there's a reason to stay in there and pitch, and that if he fights long enough he'll stumble onto it." Jim Thompson

"I guess when they're drafting peacemakers they'd better pass me by." John Steinbeck

Interviews

Over the years, I interviewed a lot of bands in the name of STM. It always amused me that I was working for an award-winning newspaper with one of the largest circulations in San Diego at the same time, and that it was easier to get interviews with some bands for my little zine with a press run of 500. I spent my days under fluorescent lights in a cubicle with fabric walls. At night, I'd sit at home, transcribing, writing and designing until I passed out. I could always look in the mirror and know I was doing something that I believed in and on my terms. It was a great way to live. The following interview excerpts are some of my favorite moments from the pages of STM. Some of the quotes are especially meaningful, others are just funny. Others just struck a chord that has resonated with me ever since. End of story. For now.

Issue 1

The first issue of Sick To Move is really only noteworthy for its existence. I only printed 200 copies - it was all I could afford. The interviews weren't that great - not as good as the ones that would follow. Despite that, STM 1 went to Canada, Japan, Germany, South Africa, England, Australia and dozens of people in America. Not bad for a first issue and not bad for such a small print run. There wasn't much worth reprinting from Issue 1, but these words from Pegboy's John Haggerty still ring as true today as they did in 1993 when he and I talked. This was the last interview I did before I almost died and the first one that got me started again. In many ways, this interview, and these particular quotes, gave birth to this zine because I knew these words needed to see print. If I had only known then what I know now ... I would have started STM sooner.

Pegboy

There have been a lot of lyrics about resistance, being yourself, longing and regret. What other themes does the band write about?

John: That's predominantly Larry's department. What we try to do overall is not something that should be easily talked about. It's really hard to describe the themes. You know, should a song mean something? I say no. A song should not really mean anything. I know it's hard, I mean, you have to write lyrics, sure, but if you can write something that creates an emotion without actually saying anything in particular, I think that's the greatest part of all.

It sounds like you want people to get their own impressions of a song.

John: Yeah. I mean, that's what we're hoping to achieve. I mean, by nature it should be vague, but it should also be stirring. It's kind of a complicated thing. Sure, the struggle, those are things that are common to all people and all places and all times. It's something that transcends time and place and language and race and color. It should be something like that. Anything within that realm. We like to write about things that are common to all people.

Writing and talking about music is really difficult. How do you discuss something that causes emotion so easily but is so hard to describe?

John: Right, because by its very nature it should transcend language and to talk about it is almost completely futile, because what you're talking about, ideally, should transcend language.

And you can't catch it, words just aren't enough.

John: Right. They cheapen it. So it's a difficult position to write about music. I mean, it's either something you get or you don't get and if you get it, I think we all know what it is, we all know that we have it in common, but can we describe it? Not really.

**"what you're talking about,
ideally, should transcend
language." john haggerty**

said I wasn't going to help you at all. I dialed the phone and a few minutes later, you wouldn't look at me. You stared at the wall, the ceiling, the stereo. You said "I hate you. Fuck you. Go to hell. Sod off and die." I couldn't give you pills. I wouldn't give them to you. I dialed the phone and you hated me for it. You didn't say goodbye when you left. Maybe you said it a week or two before, in your own way. Maybe you said it earlier that day when we were walking along the beach. It had been so long since I'd seen the ocean. After days of the desert, I needed to see the sea. We rolled up our pants and took off our shoes, wading in cold January water while throwing a tennis ball. I had the flu. You had the rest of me. You were still saying you loved me then. My feet got colder as the sand washed away. I watched you touch the mussels, running your fingers over them as the beach swallowed your toes. I asked you to marry me. You said you could never marry someone you loved. Now I'm alone again, chain smoking and drunk, the bite of cheap, distilled pine needles faint on my tongue where your taste used to be. You could hit me again now. I wouldn't feel it. And I still wouldn't stop you from raising your hand. It's almost 5 a.m. I can't feel my lips, my face, my body. All the places you touched me are numb, not that they weren't already. The tendrils you wove into me are still tugging, like vines. Like kudzu. They've grown over everything and they're slowly starting to choke me. I sat in the bar tonight, listening to old country songs on the jukebox. Looking for love in all the wrong places. You told me I was making a mistake, but I still don't believe you. I'd rather you be alive and hate me than the alternative you suggested because you may understand what exactly it was that I lost someday. Maybe you know now. Maybe that's why you hate me, because you feel you lost it too. My fingers are numb and don't want to type anymore, but the words I want to say keep coming, like someone wrote lines for me that I already knew, like the right words were just waiting for the right time. It isn't time yet. The words are still forming, congealing in the darkness, and it's always darkest now, before the sun creeps over the eastern horizon to remind me that everything can be renewed. You can too, even though you may never speak to me again. I hope the ring I gave you is still hanging around your neck. Hematite, on a cold metal chain, resting against your skin where I used to listen to your heartbeat.

Story of my life.

I'm still reeling from the worst four weeks of my life. I still need to sort it out and plan my next move. I could write about it in vague terms - pain, suffering, hurt. They fit, but they're ultimately meaningless. Late night conversations help as I plan my escape from this and everything else, as I prepare to leave everything I've ever known behind and create something new. It wasn't long ago that I couldn't listen to music - it didn't mean anything, it was hollow and empty. Lately, it's the only thing keeping me going. I walked into the Casbah the other night, alone and depressed. I had been waiting for the Dragons to play and I kept feeling lower, like I was sinking into something that nothing could pull me out of. Then they strapped on their guitars and I blissed out. I laughed, I danced and even cried. Their music was salvation, a form I can't get anywhere else. No amount of drinking or talking equals the redemptive capacity of a single power chord. I walked out grinning, elated at the spectacle and wonder. Maybe they're just a three chord rock band with a penchant for the Stones, but that night, there was something more. I walked up to the band members after the show and thanked them, because I needed the musical hand they held out. I've been depressed since then, but not as badly. I've been down since then, but not as low. There was something about bouncing around to the backbeat, the 4/4 rhythms that fuel my days and light my nights, something about the guitars, something redemptive. Something that reminds me that everything can be all right. Someday.

The color of television tuned to a dead channel.

I found her at 4:45 a.m., Wednesday, January 29, 1997, wrapped in a striped bedspread she sewed for me years ago, its blue tassels frayed after years of use. Her skin was the color of the burned cigarettes she left behind in the ashtray, her head lolling at an unnatural angle. A glass of scotch was on the counter next to a half empty decanter and a bottle of sleeping pills. She took more than 50. I called 911 and told them she was dead, so the paramedics came and told me she had passed away. As if I didn't already know. The police asked questions, took pictures. The medical examiner arrived to take the body away. Even sitting in my room, headphones on, I could hear the zipper on the body bag and clattering gurney wheels on tile as it rolled out of the house. Then she was gone, hardly any trace of her left behind save for clothes, jewelry and photographs on the walls. Now all of those things have been boxed up -

Taxis make pretty good slalom cones.

It's a grey upstate New York Sunday. I'm borrowing a friend's computer to write and her stereo to listen to Guided by Voices. It's been a strange day, all cloud-streaked skies and nicotine, drinking beer and talking to people hanging out on St. Mark's Place. It was an onion bagel with cream cheese and jazz quartet playing in Grand Central Station's Main Concourse kind of day. I caught a local from Scarsdale in the morning and listened to college students talk about "Catch 22" while I read about Phil Spector. I got on the 6; they followed, talking about poetry. I remembered the Astor Place stop from being there a year ago. If I hadn't, I would have been happy just to wander, surrounded by sound and myths, stories unfolding every second, glances and looks, random kisses floating through the day, waiting to catch passersby on the cheek. It's easy to fall in love with New York on a day like this, when the chill wind whips through the city and the streets are still damp from the previous night's rain. Yesterday, I was soaked to the bone, feeling wet wool slap against my skin as I sloshed through puddles which gradually flowed over the curbs, but today was different. Nothing really special happened, I was just absorbing the peculiarly gorgeous ambience of a city which is poetry about itself, describing swaths of motion and velocity, sweeping expanses of concrete and steel and the gentle flesh of people moving within its structures. I thought about these things as I staggered onto the train, bags of books and zines in my hand - Adorno, Bey, situationism, anarchism, a biography of Bird. Tunnel lights flashed by. Then we came back up and I saw the Projects. Row after row, block after block of spirit-crushing, prison architecture. The streets seemed full of life; the buildings defined death. It's as if the designers tried to develop structures which were so oppressive and profane to the imagination that they would prescribe the course of life. I saw one man staring through the black cast-iron fence at the train tracks. I don't know what he was thinking, but I imagined it. I also imagined the answering refrain which echoed back at him, strengthened by years and years of dark hallways, tall buildings with uniform construction and materials and no deviance from the form - you aren't going anywhere. I hope there was something in him that offered only a middle finger in response.

Closing time.

December 21. The days are getting shorter, have been for a while. It's still morning. Barely. Clouds scud across the sky, darkening the sun. Fitting my mood. You left last night. I got home at 4:30 a.m. after talking with a friend. I could still smell you on my sheets. I could still feel you in my bed. It's been about 10 hours and the dull ache of missing you is settling into my bones. In any other year, it might be indistinguishable from the pain of another overcast, chilly morn. This is sharper and deeper, colder and bluer. It's not just that I'm cold; I can deal with that. I miss your warmth, your laugh, your smile, the way you look at the world. Your touch. It's that I miss everything about you. Watching you sleep. Remembering how I felt as you asked if you could get in my way while I was writing. Then you sat in my lap and typed for me. Remember sitting on the roof at the university and holding each other as the sun set? I'll never forget it. I'll remember the sound of palm fronds rustling in the breeze. I'll hold on to the rapidly fading scent on my pillows. And I'll hold on to your memory until I see you again. It's been a long time since I've seen the ocean, the sun shining on the waves, cutting blinding swaths of silver on the water. I'll hold on to this shimmering image. Maybe it will help me get through.

It's been so long since I've seen the ocean.

You left Thursday. About 1 a.m. You walked out and I packed your bag, making sure you had everything. Almost like you never left. Or maybe I just wanted it to seem that way when you unpacked again. The coffee cup I bought you in Arizona. A ring from New Mexico. The trinkets we found when we were in Nevada. I remember you standing on the street, barefoot, my shirt hanging around your knees, looking over Lake Mead as the wind blew down from the hills. Your warm hand held mine as we walked across Hoover Dam, staring down at the concrete and the emerald waters below. They weren't as green as your eyes. The fish swam to the surface and I pointed them out. We watched them feed and then I spooned frozen yogurt into your mouth. A small plastic spoon, a smaller styrofoam cup and the pennies we crushed for souvenirs were all in your purse. I kissed you at the end of the dam when no one seemed to be looking. People milled around but no one paid much attention. Your heavy coat scratching my wrist. Getting back in the car, shivering. We stopped on the way to Kingman to look at the desert. Now it's almost a week after the door closed. You don't want to talk to me. I can't say I blame you, but you asked me to help. I told you that you'd hate me. You looked at me and

Issue 2

The second issue of *Sick To Move* is what I consider the first real one. It had two long interviews and three short ones. I talked to the New Bomb Turks and G.B. Jones and Beverly Breckenridge from Fifth Column about music at length, and interviewed Larry Livermore, Elliot Sharp and Noodles from Offspring about high school. None of us liked it. Publishing Issue 2 today would probably cause no end of trouble, especially in the wake of recent school shootings. Even then, administrators weren't particularly happy about these opinions because they diverged from their rosy view of the educational system, and some of them felt strongly enough about it to try to bend my ear on the topic. I believe now, as I did then, that dissent is the only real instigator of change and that the status quo will only move if committed individuals start pushing for something better.

Fifth Column

Did you fit in [in high school], were you popular?

G.B.: The people at high school hated me and they were terrified of me. I had a very bad reputation in high school. I went to actually five different high schools. I was the person that always came in the middle of the year. It's kind of weird and somehow I would have a bad reputation anyway. I picked a lot of fights. You know sometimes in high school there are certain types of guys that like to bug girls? I would never actually hit them but I would threaten to and scare them. I would literally terrify them. It was fun in a perverse kind of way. I don't know how I did it because now I don't know if I could but I used to have the filthiest mouth in the world and I would go up and say all these really disgusting things to them and they would just be horrified because they couldn't believe anyone would talk that way. I guess they'd never heard any of it before. It was funny.

Has your permanent record followed you?

G.B.: I think that was that.

Beverly: No one's caught up with us yet.

Did high school influence what you're doing now?

Beverly: I think everyone's experience with high school influences them. Wouldn't you say G.B.?

G.B.: No. I never got to know many people in high school and it didn't have much influence on me because I'd constantly be leaving or else I'd just skip class and go to the mall. I'd say the mall influenced me more than high school did.

Beverly: I guess I feel high school influences people because if you haven't figured it out by public school, you'll know by high school that a lot of things that are supposed to be oh-so-good and oh-so-true are just all lies. That sounds so negative.

Well, people keep saying high school is the best years of your life. The people I've talked to say it's only getting worse in terms of feeling disconnected and feeling like you don't fit in.

Beverly: It's this hugely alienating experience.

It's horrible that people still say these are the best years of your life.

G.B.: Well, when I was in high school, I remember people saying that and all you had to do was look around in the suburbs and you'd realize why they were saying that. Let's face it, they were all stupid, ugly people and that was the only time in their life when they could convince people to pay any sort of attention to them at all. They were talentless, ugly and stupid and that was their chance to get people to pay attention to them. There were the stupid girls who'd become cheerleaders and get a few moments of attention in their life and then get married. They'd start having kids and mortgages, the bills, the mother-in-law, the father-in-law and everyone yelling at them and perhaps a job and then their life was over. I was always happy those were the worst years of my life because that meant the best years were ahead. Obviously for them it was the best years of their life. It's the most pathetic thing. If you're having a good time in high school you have to stop and wonder. It's like turning over the Death card in the tarot deck.

Do you think your music is liberating?

G.B.: We get a lot of letters and calls from especially girls saying it's exciting for them to find out about Fifth Column and hear us do and say things they haven't heard people say before.

And so I think that's exciting because we get to connect with each other and you don't feel so ...

Beverly : Isolated. G.B.: Isolated, yeah. So in that sense, if you want to say it's liberating because it lets you know you're not alone, then that's great. I don't know about liberating people's consciousness, blah blah blah, all that stuff. That is kind of pretentious, but it's so nice that there are other people out there who are awake.

Beverly : Yeah. Often it's other girls saying it's cool, and I feel it makes them feel good about playing music too. It's like they're doing it and I can too. That's cool.

So it's inspiring in a way.

Beverly : Yeah. I think it's like G.B. said, you know you aren't alone and can do it too, and there's people like you who have similar interests. It's supportive.

G.B. : It's inspiring for us to meet these girls, and lots of boys have come up to us and said they think it's great and they've got a band and blah blah blah. There's lots of boys who are really stupid whose girlfriends are in bands doing stuff and they don't want to hang around with really stupid boys who are going to go "Wow man, why is your girlfriend doing that?" They want to hang around with people who have brains. So that's good too.

New Bomb Turks

So how did the Bomb Turks start?

Eric : Well, let's see, there was the Bomb Turks but there was a band with that name already ... **Matt :** There was another group from the East End called the Bomb Turks so we decided to change our name to the New Bomb Turks.

Eric : But we're not sure if that's going to work.

Matt : So we'll probably change our name back to the Bomb Turks.

Eric : But then we figured, "What's the point?" so we changed our name to the Originals.

So you've been around for about four years. How did you get together?

Matt : Well, we all slept with the same girl and kind of met that way.

Jim : It was a weird thing. She was my girlfriend first, and then she dumped me for Matt because he had long hair ...

Matt : At the time.

Jim : And then she worked at this radio station we all worked at, it was kind of like a revolving door kind of thing, we kind of met through that because we all got in this big fight one day.

Eric : And then she came out and ended up going out with a girl that we all used to go out with. That's how Columbus is, it's very incestuous, all the band members play in other bands and stuff so it kind of works out that way.

Eric, have you ever gone around impersonating Greg Dulli?

Matt : He gets compared to him, I got compared to him.

Jim : If you combined both of them, you'd have Greg Dulli.

Eric : We're going to join this service where you can do celebrity lookalikes for parties and stuff and walk around acting pretentious and misogynistic and stuff like that.

Take a song like "Born Toulouse Lautrec." It sounds like a [Killdozer] worker's anthem.

Eric : Oh, the title just popped up in my head and sounded kind of funny so I went with it.

Some of the sentiments are honest, some are a little bit funny. It was just about certain people I knew in Columbus who took themselves too seriously about what they do and put down others if they just worked a job or something. I really hate that because there's some people that have to work a job, it doesn't make them bad.

Do you guys work day jobs?

Eric : No.

Matt : We just make fun of people who do.

"I was always happy those were the worst years of my life because that meant the best years were ahead." g.b. jones

Autopsy of an unfinished life

Autopsy of an unfinished life.

This is my obituary, a work in progress. In the past few years, I left journalism, decided not to pursue teaching for the time being, stopped working for attorneys, left the copy shop where I produced STM and so forth. I fell in love, got hurt, fell in love with the same person again and got hurt again. Repeat. My dad told me that my mother had two other children, that I was the result of an affair she had with his brother and that I wasn't his son. Then he told her he was leaving her for another woman (his first wife, natch). My mom killed herself and I found her on the couch. He kicked me out of the house about a month later, sold the property and most of the things my mom wanted me to keep, fucked off to Idaho and died somewhere along the way. These pages cover nearly four years of my life and the tales are interwoven; they're more or less broken up by subject; they're all broken. I retreated to music, to hiding from the outside world and getting my head together, but everything followed me in and didn't wipe the mud off its shoes. I've had my heart broken several times. I'm almost used to it. I've met people and gone to bed with them, only to spend our time talking about feeling like we can't connect, like we can't trust. Like we can't love. Like the only comfort we can find is in fucking because at least that is relatively straightforward. We meet, we fuck, we move on, or linger for a while over cigarettes and breakfast, maybe another date or two. Then it gets uncomfortable and we disappear, trying to find someone else who might be able to fulfill some need we can't admit to having because it might make us vulnerable. Yet here I sit, my heart on my sleeve, admitting that I seek people out in the hope that we might be able to connect in a way that enriches us all. I love too much and sometimes, I suspect, not well enough. I frequently fear that, with some of the people I have loved, our relationship ended because I was unable to give them what they needed, that I couldn't dress their wounds or stop the bleeding, that I couldn't put an end to their hurt, nor they to mine and, with this mutual helplessness firmly established between us like a rickety bridge made of rotting wood, lashed together with dried vines, we turned away, unable to cross it for fear it would collapse with the first step.

Fatheralong.

The post office flag was at half-mast today. I don't know who died. I was stuck in a gridlocked parking lot, trying to get back on the road. My window was down and it was a warm day at the end of summer, hinting at fall's approach. The sun was hanging low in the sky, just like my spirits. A small access road runs parallel to the post office and as I looked over, I saw a kid chasing after a golf ball. Apparently, he and his dad were as sick of traffic as I was, but they pulled over and started bouncing a ball back and forth. My dad and I used to do things like that. As it is, I haven't seen or spoken to him in the best part of a week now. Different schedules. When I looked at those two, I remembered how it used to be, how my dad would take me to the public swimming pool. He would swim around and I'd sit on his back. Every so often, he'd dive underwater. The water was only four feet deep, but back then, it might as well have been forty. I'd hang on, take one last breath of air, and then look around, the chlorine burning my eyes and the lack of oxygen burning my lungs. I felt like a dolphin sometimes - all grey and slippery. Then he'd start to swim to the surface. I was usually gasping for breath whenever we broke the water, blinded by the sun glinting off the midsummer ripples ...

Going on a party.

She invited me to her party. I went. I hadn't planned to drink; I had a beer. I didn't plan to smoke. I stood on her porch while 20 odd people talked in her garage. I looked over the town, listening to power lines crackle at the sub-station in the cool night air. I wanted to talk to her, I sat by myself, staring at the lights. She had hip hop on the stereo; I had the blues. I wanted her to walk up behind me, touch my back and whisper in my ear. I wanted to hear her giggle. I wanted something more than falling asleep in my car for a couple of hours, feeling sick and wanting to throw up. I kept setting my alarm, thinking 15 minutes would be enough of a nap and I'd feel better. Then it was 2 a.m. and I had to be at work in a few hours. The crisp air was chilly, like summer should be as it forecasts fall's stealthy approach. Bruce Springsteen was singing "I'm On Fire." I was in the driver's seat, watching the pale green glow of the instrument panel in the window as I came down the freeway, heading into the golden valley where all the city lights sparkled before me like cheap costume jewelry laid out in a pawn shop display case.

male and a Pennywise fan.

Texas Is The Reason - Do You Know Who You Are? CD (Revelation Records)

The first time I heard this CD, I was riding in a friend's car. As the soft opening notes of "Nickel Wound" came on, we came over the crest of the hill and were momentarily blinded by the afternoon sun, and I can't think of a better way to describe this album. It's searing, containing burning notes and lyrics which scrape away at the mind with all the delicacy of a paring knife. It's bitter, hurt and guardedly optimistic. It speaks to people on fundamental levels, calling them as they're sitting on the bed, wondering why their partner left, driving down the road, leaving a town for the last time, refusing to look back at their memories so they don't turn into a pillar of salt. It's like an embrace from a mysterious stranger who understands, empathizes and comforts you as long as you need it, then slips away into the darkness once again.

Johnny Thunders - Have Faith CD (Mutiny Records)

After all the shit I've had to wade through for this issue, this album is the payoff. This is the jackpot, the gold at the end of the rainbow, the proverbial fucking winning lottery ticket. Johnny Thunders is dead, may he rest in whatever peace he found, but this live concert, taped in Tokyo in 1988, bears witness to the pure, unadorned form of rock he played. He wouldn't have sounded out of place on the same stage as Chuck Berry, Little Richard or Fats Domino. He probably would have sounded (and felt) right at home. See, this isn't, as some might argue, punk. This is just rock 'n' roll, and by no means is that an insult in any way. See, this is Rock as Religion, testifying to the Glory and the Power and the Hosannas from On High. This is the Chorus, raising its collective voice in song to the Heavens and bringing down new Commandments. Thunders tears through quite a few years of rock on this album, providing a history lesson and a primer for the kids. See, this is how punk could be, and at one point in time was, done. Nearly 10 years after the show in question, it doesn't sound dated at all. Considering the songs are about 20 years old now, it's surprising that they still resonate with the same power, fury and passion they carried when they were first cut into wax. I had lost some of my faith - I always do when I'm putting one of these things together. As I wade through what passes for rock, it never fails to depress me that bands manage to release the same third-rate shit over and over, and over again once more for good measure. This album wipes the slate clean though. It makes one thing perfectly clear - it's okay to have faith in rock 'n' roll. Sometimes, it may not be warranted and sometimes doubting it is the most intelligent course of action anyone can undertake, but, like a wandering preacher who comes in from the desert like a dried up tumbleweed, an album like this can suddenly make everything seem worthy of faith and hope and trust, all over again.

Tiltwheel - Battle Hymns for the Recluse Youth CD (Liquid Meat)

I used to be able to explain how Tiltwheel makes me feel; now it seems the only means I have left of describing it is saying this band never fails to raise my spirits, never fails to make me cry, never fails to make me remember why it is that I keep trying long after any expectation of success has dissipated. I've reached the point where this band means so much to me that the only remotely meaningful criticism I can offer is saying "Thank you." Thank you it is then.

Universal Order of Armageddon - Universal Order of Armageddon CD (Kill Rock Stars)

Rock at the brink of immolation. Maybe that's the best way to describe U.O.A. They always sounded like they were on the verge of something - maybe explosion, implosion, transcendence. It's anyone's guess. To me, it always sounded like the last fading vestiges of rebellion and hope, the remaining partisan elements slowly being hunted down and exterminated by oppressive forces, confined in barbed wire camps and ready to make another escape attempt at the first available opportunity. It's music which seems inhuman, yet simultaneously captures the essence of what it means to be alive at the end of the millennium. Maybe it's only fitting that the band broke up a while ago and this is their final testament. Everything you need to hear on one CD. Everything you need.

Larry Livermore

Has high school influenced what you're doing now?

It's influenced me in the sense that I've always felt like an outsider and like I had to prove myself to the world. Also, although my high school had a very bad effect on me emotionally because of the religious brainwashing and sexual repression, I got a pretty good basic education in the fundamentals of history, language, economics, political science, all of which has stayed with me and formed the building blocks of most of what I have done in my adult life. So it wasn't all bad; I just wish I could have gotten a little more enjoyment out of it, and been able to put it in a little better perspective.

Kevin "Noodles" Wasserman

Did you like high school?

Did I like high school? No, no. I hated it, actually. I seriously hated it. I don't know, I went every day, I was too much of a nerd to ever ditch or anything, but I just didn't fit in. I hung out with a tough group of kids and I was the whipping boy of this group. I hung out with all the punks and punk was just like, not allowed when I was into it when I was in high school and we used to get beat up by the jocks. Actually that was kind of fun though, that was one of the fun things. They would line the halls and have this jock gauntlet and you had to walk down the hall. They'd just push you back and forth and it was fun just to do it. I mean, we didn't care. We were slamming around at backyard parties on Friday and Saturday nights, so we didn't care if the jocks wanted to do that to us. It was no big deal. If we had some music going, it would have been great.

Elliott Sharp

Did you like high school?

High school sucked. Classes were boring and stupid as were most of the teachers and students. I was often battling administration types because I was involved in an underground newspaper - very political stuff - anti-war, free speech, this was 1968-69. There was one exception, a great physics teacher - good anti-authoritarian attitude, non-condescending. Did you fit in?

My buddies and I were the outcast intellectual hippie fuck-ups. Long hair was quite an oddity in suburbia at the time so we were constantly fighting for our right to look the way we wanted. We reveled in our anti-social status and hung out with other like-minded people in the woods, in parking lots, at the edge of golf-courses, in construction sites, even "coffee-houses" set up by religious organizations always altering consciousness in various ways.

What did you do to keep yourself amused in class?

Doodles, amphetamine-fueled cryptic densities, secret reading, morse-code communication, sex and drug and rock and roll fantasies, occasional pranks. I hid a subliminal-level audio oscillator in a heating duct that drove everyone crazy after about ten minutes. I nearly got suspended.

Were you ever suspended or expelled? If so, what happened?

I moved for closure in a very boring social studies class. I was suspended but then reinstated a few days later. I was also banned from distributing our underground newspaper.

Has high school influenced what you're doing now?

Only in that one realizes that the world is run by the same shitholes that ran things in high school, you know the archetypes, and that one must confound, confuse and subvert these people in any way possible.

Do you have a message for kids in high school?

Don't believe anything you are told. Demand empirical evidence and respect for the laws of nature.

"I've always felt like an outsider and like I had to prove myself to the world." Larry Livermore

Issue 3

By any measure, Issue 3 was my favorite for many years. It included the first of many talks with Dave Smailey of Down By Law, as well as a freewheeling chat with Heavenly and a slightly more serious conversation with Lois Maffeo. Since the original Smailey interview lasted over 2 hours, selecting excerpts was hard, but I feel what appears here offers a fair representation. Down By Law recently put out "Fly The Flag" and Lois has released some songs with Fugazi's Brendan Canty in the last few months. On a sad note, Matthew Fletcher, Heavenly's drummer, died a few years ago. As tilwheal sings, "Pass the jug around my friend! Someday we'll see you again."

Down By Law

[On recording "Punkrockacademyfightsong" at A&M Studios]

Dave: ... We were recording and we couldn't get a sound that I liked for one of the songs. I believe it was "Punk as Fuck." Finally our producer said through the control room, "All right, just turn every knob on your amp up to 10," and I said "Really?" and he said, "Yeah, turn every knob all the way up." So I did - gain, bass, treble, mids, everything - and it did sound pretty damn good. It was really cool, it gave a distorted sound to the guitar that I liked for that song and we were just going for it and it was really good. We were cooking and then all of a sudden the phone rings in the control room and it's the Rolling Stones and they said "Turn that shit off! We can't hear ourselves fucking think!" My amp was facing out into the hallway which then faced into their studio and so the very first night we were there, we pissed off the biggest rock 'n' roll band in the world and we were really psyched because that was about the most we could ask for.

So how much thought do you give to what you do as a whole - the lyrics, the music, everything like that combined?

Dave: I give a lot of thought to that. That's my life. Lyrics can consume me for months until I get it just how I want it, or sometimes they just flow right out of me. We have a song on the new album called "Haircut," and I wrote that because Angry John and I are in a side band called 33 Revolution which is just a total pop band. We play once in a while, practice very rarely and have fun and the drummer from Mary's Danish plays drums. Anyway, we played a show at the Whiskey and there were about four or five bands that opened up the show and every single one of them was Pearl Jam and every single one of them wanted to be Pearl Jam. For some reason, I guess because I'm in Down By Law, they put us as headliners at the Whiskey so we had to sit through all these bands and I'd meet the guys backstage and then I'd say, "Hey, what do you guys sound like?" and they all said, "Oh, we're going for a Pearl Jam kind of thing." I just couldn't believe that they could be so open about wanting to rip a band off and wanting the cash. It's just really the antithesis of everything I stand for as a musician and by the time we got onstage, I was furious and we came out and we just blew through a set and the people who had been really into these slow, grungy bands were just standing there with their mouths hanging open in shock. I was just really furious and at the end I said something like, "Hey, we're Pearl Jam, thanks a lot, good night!" I went home that night and I went into the mini-studio I've got set up here in our house and I wrote and recorded that song in an hour. It just poured out of me. But I mean, I think a lot about lyrics and music because they're a part of me. If a song doesn't move me, then it's not going to move anyone else. Luckily, I've never put out a song that I'm ashamed of. There's always something in a song I've written that I really find fits what I wanted it to do. It hits the emotional chord I felt was right. So I think a lot about what I do and places we play and things that don't really directly relate to the music. For instance, is the club all ages? Is the club too small for all the kids who want to see us? Are the ticket prices too high? There's a lot of stuff that goes with being a punk rock musician, or at least I think there should be, that a lot of kids might not think about and that I think is important.

It sounds like you're really ethical about what you do and how you do it.

Dave: Well, I try to be. I feel that I should be and that more people should be also. I don't want punk rock or independent music to be just another form of rock 'n' roll. What we started in 1981 was something so unique that we've got this whole subculture now. None of the stuff really existed before then. I mean, it did, but not on the scale that it does today. That's all stuff

Silver Jews - Starlite Walker CD (Drag City)

"Trains Across The Sea" sounds like a lazy afternoon in the humid Georgia summer, drinking Strawberry Fanta from a bottle while relaxing in a hammock on some porch, watching the sun slowly sink behind the kudzu-covered trees to the west. These achingly beautiful songs don't rock, they just doze off, mumbling about dreams they once had in the fading pink light.

Silver Jews - The Natural Bridge CD (Drag City)

Laoconic country and western music, shuffling down the mean streets to the methadone clinic. Sure, it's ironic - this is country the way Pavement might play it if they were drunk on Lone Star - but it's also sincere, much in the same way that Hank Williams was. It addresses fears and loneliness, and sounds about as calculated as hash marks on a truck driver's mileage sheet. It's gorgeous, lush and just the thing for sleepless nights when you can't sleep until dawn rears its ugly head and chases the darkness away.

Sixteen Horsepower - Sackcloth 'n' Ashes CD (A&M)

Truly, deliciously evil. Don't take that the wrong way though. This isn't some pancake goth band for the lunchbox crowd or some bullshit death metal band for insecure speed freaks. Nope, these guys sound like three Pentecostal hillbillies whose love of Revelations 3:14 is superseded only by their penchant for burying dead lovers. The single "Black Soul Choir" is a good introduction to the band - stand-up bassist Keven Soil, drummer Jean-Yves Tola and enigmatic, eyeball-rolling vocalist David Eugene Edwards (who plays a mean banjo). Like the entire album, the song has a sepia-toned antiquity with notes that bleed with every beat. And while the whole thing merits repeated listening, scan forward to "Hamm's Way" and "American Squeeze" where Edwards lets loose with the scariest accordion licks to ever creep into the human ear. (ERIC)

Stylab#1 - Self-titled CD (Astralwerks/Caroline)

Fares about as well as the last one did.

Shapshot - 16 Valve Hate CD (Taang! Records)

"I'm always angry! No apparent reason! Try to make excuses! There aren't any." These four lines from the title track offer a more cogent review of this album than I ever could.

Spain - The Blue Moods Of Spain CD (Restless Records)

The only one in a blue mood after listening to this disc is me. From the 50's Blue Note album cover rip-off to the monotonous bass lines to deadpan vocals, this thing is as lame as a thirty-year old horse. There's no emotional pitch here whatsoever, which might be the point. But then why flirt with this whole "blue mood" idea? The tempos never vary. The lyrics are a buncha clumsy, confessional tripe. The arrangements are even clumsier. You get the picture? (PHILLIP)

The Smeears - Like Hell CD (Headhunter/Cargo)

Angry grmt rock. Really angry. Like castration angry. (PHILLIP)

Swish - Supremax CD EP (Instant Mayhem/Caroline)

Yeah, this is okay, but there's not enough here to make me want to tell you why. (PHILLIP)

Swindle - Within These Walls CD (Cargo/Grilled Cheese)

It's punk and then some. This is green gob in yer face punk with liberty spikes and ... oh hell. Let's be honest, if only for a bit - aren't we all a little ridiculous for trying to revisit glory days which are long past? Doesn't it make us all a little bit more foolish when we try to recapture a mood, an ideal, which has already had its day? I like this and it's catchy, but face facts - punk has been done beyond death. Now we're just feeding off a decayed corpse. Maybe it's time to do something new. We now resume our regular review ... a fist of defiance in the air! Naturally, it rocks.

Ten Foot Pole - Rev CD (Epitaph Records)

Speedy, melodic HC with a sort of liberal humanist bent behind it, meaning Ten Foot Pole's music features somewhat vague lyrics applicable to nearly everyone's life - provided you're

With disk title in mind, I was a little worried to hear an actual acoustic guitar on the first track, but the heart felt is quickly left for the heart-rending. Not quite my cup of tea, but if the speed-core crunchy guitar, drum machine, and heavily-influenced-by-technology vocals are yours, maybe Optimum Wound Profile is the band of the year. As for me, I can only hear the word "kill" a few times before I need to see Chow Yun Fat blasting a trail through a tea shop. (ADAM)

Pennywise - Full Circle CD (Epitaph)

I don't think my pants are big enough to appreciate this. While this record expresses grief, mourning and undirected anger (and I understand a thing or two about that), and tries to come to terms with losing a loved one/bro to suicide (and I understand a few more things about that), at the moment, this just bores the hell out of me.

Propagandhi - Less Talk, More Rock CD (Fat Wreck Chords)

It's hard to write about Propagandhi's music the way it deserves to be written about on such a beautiful morning as this. But maybe this is the perfect time, when all the subjects the band addresses, when all the sexism, racism and homophobia hasn't gotten to work, out of bed, or even woken up for that matter. Well, not like such emotions ever "wake up," used in the metaphorical sense, they don't exactly regain consciousness because such things are, in and of themselves, a form of sleeping. Much like "How to Clean Everything," and Propagandhi's split 10" with I Spy, "Less Talk, More Rock" is blistering political punk, blunt enough to feel like being beaten senseless with a club carrying all the horrible and brutal realities we somehow manage to ignore on a daily basis yet tender enough to remind us we aren't alone in feeling helpless, uncertain and scared, as long as we don't allow our fears and feelings to immobilize us. This album strips the shackles and mechanical devices from the animals, the blinders from the people and points the finger where it belongs - power structures, class loyalties and the like. Make no mistake, Propagandhi is political, but they couch their vehemently just and humane politics in melodic, speedy punk songs. They may be rants, but they're cogent, coherent rants decorated with a spoonful of musical sugar to help the antitoxins slide down the back of our collective throat. We've all been poisoned for so fucking long, thinking certain groups should be treated certain ways due to our socialization, the media depiction of people and what is socially accepted that I'm not sure if the antitoxin will take effect in the people who need it most, but it's impossible to listen to these songs and not want to do something. Maybe it's something as simple as reading a book or something more complex, like organizing a group at a high school or college to fight back against sexist and racist institutions, date rape, homophobia and trying to educate people about what's going on beneath the surface of what they see and hear, what those transmitted viral messages really mean and how they really infect our cognitive systems and what they really effect, how they really, at a subconscious or even conscious level, influence who and how we are. As Edward Sapir once wrote, "We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation." As Benjamin Whorf later wrote, "People act about situations in ways which are like the ways they talk about them." So what does all this mean? It's pretty simple actually. Propagandhi provides listeners with the chance to analyze their actions, language and thoughts and encourages everyone to do so. And there's no excuse for not doing something after listening to this album. This is the sound I will conduct my own personal revolution to as I analyze how I contribute to oppressive systems and what I can do to change myself and then start on the world around me.

Puley - Esteem Driven Engine CD (Epitaph)

And these days don't seem like mine. They seem like they belong to someone else and I'm just borrowing them because life can't be like this. And then sometimes the music cracks through the shell and lets a few sunbeams in, capturing a mood, reaffirming my beliefs and ideals. It keeps me going. This album is more though - it's a push in the right direction, some encouragement to get moving again. No more memories of broken hearts because time is getting short and I'm just about ready to break these walls down all over again.

Sex Pistols - Filthy Lucre CD (Virgin Records) Absolute Impotence.

that punk rock has done. All by ourselves, we've built up this whole universe of clubs and kids, and kids' lives are being affected by music in ways that I never was before and I think that's really important, but it's also a responsibility for the people who are doing it. So for me, I take it pretty seriously. I'm not like an undertaker at a morgue or something, I have fun too, but I feel like I'm not here to be a rock 'n' roll star, I'm here to promote an alternative viewpoint of the world and maybe offer some hope for kids who might not have any.

That was something I had always noticed about your music. There's always a sense of optimism but it also seems to be a means of transcendence, of breaking away from the everyday world and moving on to something better.

Dave: Yeah, that's probably a good way to put it actually, because the everyday world can be pretty brutal and even if it's not that brutal it can be kind of a grind. That term, "the grind," is really true, life can really grind on you. You have a job, responsibilities, especially once you get out of college or high school and you start to work. Whenever it is that somebody starts to work, it can really be a painful thing, especially if you don't like your job much but know you have to go because you have to earn money to live. So yeah, a lot of my songs or maybe the spirit of what I do encourages people not to worry because there's something bigger out there. There's music and spirituality and keeping your own head where you want it to be. That's easier said than done, believe me. In this world, it's much easier to say "Live your own life and be your own person" than it actually is to do it.

There are things in [Independent music] that get carried too far.

Dave: Yup. You can carry any good idea too far. Straight edge is a good example. I am, of course, a fan of straight edge and helped establish it in the United States, I believe in it. I really think straight edge is a great ideal, but the whole thing is that it should be there for those who want it. If someone wants to have a beer or smoke a cigarette or have a joint, as long as they're not hurting themselves or hurting other people, who cares? I've been around some really wonderful people who drink beer and does it affect my relationship with them? Not in the slightest. They're just doing their thing. But there are some kids who take the ideal of straight edge and carry it to this fanatical extreme and that's intolerant and fanaticism and that's where the ethics of punk rock really have to come in. The whole idea was to live and let live. If someone wanted to bleach their hair green, they could and if someone wanted to play their music as fast as they possibly could, then they could. The ideals are great, but you can carry them too far.

Are you still straight edge?

Dave: Yeah I am. I don't know if I would be straight edge by some straight edge kid's definition, you know what I mean? ... To me the definition was keeping your head clear at all times so you could produce more with your life and whatever you did. For some people, like Jimi Hendrix, I can't see Jimi Hendrix having been the great, powerful musical force that he was without having taken drugs. Or Darby Crash. He wouldn't have been him without being so crazily fucked up. Not that I'm advocating that, I'm just saying for some people it works. My theory of straight edge is keeping your head clear to produce things and not getting fucked up. But whether or not someone had a beer, like let's say someone is straight edge but they have a beer and then go on to do whatever they do, does that mean they aren't straight edge anymore? I don't know. It's a pretty tough question. But anyway, I am not into those extreme definitions of what straight edge is at all, but I support the ideals of positive straight edge as much as possible.

Roger Miller sang "I'm not judging you/ I'm judging me" in ["Academy Fight Song"], and it seems like a lot of Down By Law's music is more introspective and about changing yourself to change the world instead of trying to change the world around you without changing yourself first.

Dave: Yeah, that's exactly it. That's exactly it. I really feel that very strongly. I would love to think the youth of the world are going to unite and overthrow the older, corporate, conservative structures ruling our known universe but I don't really think that's going to happen. However, we can change ourselves and affect each other and that's something no one can take away unless kids stop listening to music. But as long as music is out there and kids have access to it, there's always going to be a chance to grow and become involved in that music and it really can affect things. It doesn't mean necessarily that if you like a certain band that you have to go out and change the world, but it means maybe you'll think a little bit deeper about stuff and realize and how everything relates to everything else. If you can affect just a little thing, then it's a start.

You can do almost anything when you're wearing a tie, like not comb your hair for four days or something, and it's okay.

Dave: Yeah, it's true. The Jam wore ties, but they wore them almost straight, and I go for more of a punk attitude which is that the tie looks good, it's a sense of style, but it also pokes fun at people who really wear ties or who really love them, or like you said, people think wearing a tie makes everything great. You know, take a Nazi skinhead, put a tie on him and he's an okay guy. That's not right.

So what is the Dave Smalley fashion sense? If you were to publish a fashion guide, what would be included?

Dave: That actually would be one thing. I think a good tie, slightly askew, put over a shirt that maybe has some writing on it or certainly one that's not tucked in. I also wear Vans sneakers and shorts. One tip is always wear the shirts of a band you like. You never know when someone from that band, say it's a local band, will be driving around and see someone wearing their shirt. If it's some kid who doesn't think anyone else in the world knows their music and sees someone wearing a shirt of a band they like, they can go talk to them and maybe form a friendship. I know a lot of Down By Law fans have met by wearing the shirts, which is really neat. If it's really hot, I wear the normal Southern California punk boy from D.C. clothes, and if it's okay weather, I try to dress sharp, yet askew. I'm a big fan of the mod movement so I guess that's pretty heavily influenced me.

On a final note, from everything we've been talking about, it sounds like you have some very distinct principles you live by. What are those?

Dave: Well, I don't know if I've ever sat down and put them into actual words, but I guess believe in yourself and one of the most important things I would encourage is doing what you want to do in life and that's hard to do because mostly what people want to do doesn't pay the rent and doesn't pay for food. But if you can possibly do it, or even if you can't make it your life, don't stop doing what you love. If you're a painter, you might not be able to make a living at it, but don't stop painting. Don't get too caught up in the 9 to 5 routine, coming home and being tired and turning on the TV. I've done that and I know how easy it is. It's really hard to stay focused on what you love, but that's one thing. Try and live your life as honestly as you can. I guess another one is take care of each other because there aren't a lot of people who take the time to smile and talk to people who they don't know or give a helping hand to others. That almost sounds like Christian dogma, but it really is true. Help your neighbor because it makes you feel good for one thing, and it'll make him or her feel good for another and it's just the right thing to do. I think if kids were raised more with that sense of what's right and wrong it might make the world a little bit better. Just stay true to your ideals. That's the trick, to find a set of ideals that get you through and make you motivated to live your life. "Looking For Something" is kind of about that. What is it that makes you get out of bed in the morning and do your thing and want to live? Everybody has something or should try and find something, because it's not enough in life to get by. I don't mean financially, I mean overall. It's not enough to stay put and get by and have fun and then go to bed. If you don't contribute, or if you don't change yourself and grow, then you're just using oxygen and you're not doing anybody any good, least of all yourself.

Heavenly

I remember one of the songs on the "P.U.N.K. Girl" EP sounded like it was about an assault. ...

M: There is an assault in the a cappella song "So" and also in the song "Hearts And Crosses." We have quite a lot of assaults in our songs.

A: Well, two on this one.

That's two out of five though. That's a fairly high incidence rate.

M: On that record yeah. The dead cat LP doesn't have assaults.

"The Dead Cat" LP.

A: It sounds more like something Spinal Tap would have. ... That's what we feel we're aiming towards really. In about five years we're going to be Spinal Tap.

So you'll be going through your free jazz stage by then?

M: I think so. We've already gone through that but only in private. We wouldn't wish to foist that on the unfortunate public.

A: Yet.

Mr. T Experience - Night Shift At The Thrill Factory CD (Lookout!)

The Many Moods of Dave and the MTX song it corresponds to:

Don't give a fuck if you live or die = "Wearing Out"

Heartbreak = "Ticking Powder In The Sleeping Bags"

Lust = "Velvetia"

Don't give a fuck if you live or die = "A Zillion Years"

... All these songs, stuck in my head, every day for the past 8 or 9 years. This record is STILL part of my decision making process. Glad to see it out again. (DAVE)

Robert Mitchum - Calypso - Is like so... CD (Scamp Records)

Entertaining is the understatement of the year - this CD makes "William Shatner sings show tunes" look like a paper airplane after the Apollo moon landing. It is certainly borderline racist the way Mitchum dawns the Calypso accent for these 12 magical ballads (the CD has two bonus tracks, count your blessings), but to call Mitchum a racist would mean someone is taking this whole thing far too seriously. "Deep down, Robert Mitchum is a wanderer," begins the one-of-a-kind tale on the CD's liner notes, and if there is any doubt as to the validity of that statement, one need only speculate as to where he must have wandered to get roped into recording this album. Keep this one around for special occasions, like when it's time for the family to leave and they just won't go. (ADAM)

Morsel - Noise Floor CD (Choke Inc.)

Morsel could probably write a good song to save their life, but apparently no one has tried holding a gun to their head to get it from them yet. Seeingnly, they employ every annoying vocal effect available in modern technology although the purpose of such gratuitous use isn't clear. Periodic melodies surface only to be kicked into submission and cast aside. The result is a pointless, meandering album showing off the band's wasted talent.

Negative FX and Last Rights - Self-titled CD (Taang! Records)

Negative FX broke up long before this was released. Praise the loss and pass the Advil.

New Bomb Turks - Scared Straight CD (Eptaph)

Except for their reputation, I knew nothing of the Turks before hearing this album. I can't compare it to earlier recordings. But I love this album. It's punk in a way punk should be - stripped down and unpretentious. Like another "punk" band we're fond of in these parts - RFTC - the New Bomb Turks are pushing the envelope, albeit not as aggressively as Rocket. What they're doing is recognizing is that punk has as much to do with the 50's as the 70's, and there's a lot to be gained by incorporating instruments (piano, keys) you wouldn't think of as punk into their hyperdriven music. I don't know if that, along with Eric Davidson's startling lyrics, makes them the future of anything, but I'll wager that in ten years they'll be regarded as a seminal 90's band. (PHILIP)

New Wet Kojak - Self-titled CD (Touch and Go Records)

Touch and Go manages once again to stay at the top of the hipper-than-thou indie rock heap with this release by New Wet Kojak. It boasts members of Girls Against Boys, Gray Matter, 3 and Shudder to Think in this collaboration of tongue in cheek, stupid/foxy, drunken strip tease numbers. Scott McClelland provides lots of deep, breathy vocals and repeated saxophone noodlings find their way into many songs care of Charles Bernington. They put their best foot forward on the first track, "Stick Out Your Tongue," which starts the old hips moving with a sultry Nick Cave swagger. Boasting titles such as "Sexy Postcard," "Unbuckled" and "Shake You Down," New Wet Kojak do their best to strike below the belt and ... hell, it just might work for you. If you're slumped and groping on the couch with your new (and maybe quite temporary) love interest, New Wet Kojak will make it feel okay to say those cheesy things like, "Oh yeah, feels so good baby," or "Mhm, did you come?" But if you've been sending demos of your band to Touch and Go for years with no reply, this CD will make it fairly easy to sit back and justify your rejection with one snide comment - "I guess it is all about who you know." Relax, knucklehead, and don't take everything so damn seriously. (JOSH)

Optimum Wound Profile - Asphyxia CD (First Fun Records)

Ruiz Group and sobbing hysterically. 6. Repeat next quarter.) (TOM)

Lifetime - Hello Bastards LP (Jade Tree)

Melodic and speedy HC with hellia emo lyrics about emotions, loneliness, reaching out to people and only grasping empty air. This band is tight, changing tempos on a pinhead occupied by a few thousand angels without knocking one off or even jostling any of them - sometimes playing slow, other times breaking into a blistering frenzy of drumbeats and riffage. The band usually falls into a groove that strikes an emotional chord, perhaps best demonstrated by "(The Gym Is) Neutral Territory," a raging, melodic song which is apparently about disliking someone, apathy or disliking apathetic people. Something like that. I've mostly given up trying to figure out what songs are "about." In this case, not knowing what it's about doesn't matter because this album just kills me.

Los Ass-Dragners - Abbey Roadkill CD (Crypt Records)

Having been to Oviedo, Spain, where these folks make their homes, I must say that things seem to have changed quite a little bit. The punk band I saw play there in 1990, was only discernible as punk because the band identified themselves as such. This record is certainly punk by definition, but there is nothing new, distinct, or particularly unique beyond that. To quote the band in their warning on the rear of the jewel box, "this is super-fast, super-raw harsh-er-mellow nasty punk shit." I think that really says it all, but probably not in the good way they intended it. (ADAM)

Massive Attack v. Mad Professor - No Protection CD (Gyroscope Records)

It's transcendent, the blurring beats and dubby bass, the seductive and sensual throbbing and pulsing blips and musical stutters, the soothing and calming cloud-like waves of synthesized sound washing these songs with a silk cloth and exotic body oils. I recently changed the lights in my room to 25-watt colored bulbs. Albums like this are the reason, they are the cure to what ails us. They are the antidote to overly stressful days and nights, offering nothing less than glorious, redemptive music dropped from on high by angels and sunbeams, starlight and distant constellations promising a brighter tomorrow.

The Master Musicians of Jajouka - Brian Jones Presents The Pipes of Pan At Jajouka CD (Point Music/Polygram)

The year before Brian Jones left the Stones and drowned in his swimming pool, he went to Morocco to hang with/record these amazing musicians during the Festival of Pan. What he got was this document of frenzied, repetitive group drumming, flutes, chanting, wailing, and such that is totally outside of time. Burroughs describes them as "a 4,000 year old rock n' roll band." While that might make sense to Western ears, it denies the massive spirituality inherent in the music - where the idea is to plug into the days-long groove and in the small subtle breaks of rhythm or tone, find God. Or purity. Or revelation. Or some such high-toned, difficult to convey primordial stuff that most Western music has no contact with. It's the kind of music that finally helps you to grasp the essence of music - that it is not a party or a celebration, but a form of worship. Sadly, Jones and friends put some really stupid effects (flange, chorusing, etc.) on this tape, which was the custom at the time. That doesn't ruin anything, but it does, at moments, drain this wonderful re-release of its fundamental character. Other than that, this album could put your jaw on the floor. (PHILIP)

Medusa Oblongada - Self-titled CD (Megallithic Records)

I hate drum machines, bad "techno" metal, singers who use effects on their voice to sound tough and records with no lyrics. If you are impressed by boring mechanical shit like Nine Inch Nails, then you will love this. This one has it all. I am pretty sure I can beat all of these guys up, so if you guys ever want to come to San Diego, get a hold of me through Scott and I'll meet you somewhere and turn you back into the Cock-Rock glam boys you were two years ago. GO AWAY. (DAVE)

Milkline - Braille CD (Choke Inc.)

I probably won't listen to this eminently noisy and forgettable dirge rock after this review is finished, unless I have some overwhelming urge to bludgeon my already bruised brain for no reason whatsoever and can't find a hammer to do it properly.

Why not?

M: Because I think they'd probably arm themselves and we would have to wear protective clothing.

Lois mentioned that [you busked last night]. That's not something most bands would do.

A: Well it was Lois' idea.

M: Evan Dando would do it. He would do it and you couldn't stop him. You'd go "Shut up Evan," and he'd go "No! I want to play a bit part in your life again!" You can't shut him up.

A: Mathew didn't think it was a very good idea.

M: I thought it was an embarrassing hippie thing to do and scowled at them. It was kind of nice and sweet I guess.

Since we're on the topic of the dead cat album, some of the songs like "Me And My Madness" and "Sperm Meets Egg, So What?" seem to be sarcastic, yet focusing on darker issues.

M: Yeah, I think that's true. I mean, we're not exactly the Sisters Of Mercy.

And you're probably much happier for it.

A: Or Slayer.

M: Or Slayer. We're never going to write a song that goes, "Your corpse rots in blood" or "I'm depressed, it's raining" or something. So if we want to deal with the darker issues, we have to deal with it in a slightly flippant way because otherwise people would think we were Morrissey and just whining on and being sad and pathetic.

A: Oh no, that's not true though because Morrissey is pretty ironic.

M: That is true. Morrissey is pretty ironic, but he's still sad and pathetic.

She's waiting for the muso to strike. So about these feminist philosophies you mentioned earlier, what are they?

A: Oh, I don't have any philosophies at all.

M: Someone asked us what our songs were about, and I think pretty much it's like boy meets girl, boy is horrible, girl kills boy kind of thing.

These types of interviews are fun to read.

A: Good. We hope so. Sometimes we do serious ones.

M: Not usually when I appear. One time they were doing this really boring, serious interview and so me and Pete just came and stood on the table where they were doing it and did Elvis impressions until they shut up. We had to pick these preening popinays' bubbles. These pop stars. Where do they get off talking crap all the time?

I still can't believe they had to demand that workers smile at Euro Disney.

M: Yeah. Well, did you hear about what happened at Euro Disney? The best one was all the employees making hardcore porno films on site. It's absolutely true and I'm not inventing this. Amelia thinks I'm inventing this but they had to sack about 40 employees because they had all teamed up to make hardcore porno films at Euro Disney which they were selling in Amsterdam. This does not quite fit in with Walt's image. There's Bambi, there's his dildo. I don't think so.

A: Bambi fist fucking.

M: I swear this is true. It's a good place to take your children though.

So there's something else coming up, the Heavenly fashion line, featuring power ties and business suits.

A: We could do it.

I'm frightened now.

M: You wait until you see how we dress, then you'll be scared.

A: Come up and say hello when we play San Diego.

M: Wear a red flower in your buttonhole.

You presuppose I'll be wearing a shirt with buttonholes.

M: Of course. I hope you're a dignified gentleman who wouldn't go out without one. No t-shirts, you ruffian!

Well, I'll make sure that I'm properly attired then.

M: A tie, slacks, a waistcoat.

You forgot an ascot.

M: A what?

Replace the tie with an ascot.

M: Okay. What? An ascot? I don't know what an ascot is, but okay. Very foppish.

Lois

In all honesty, your music and Ian MacKaye are two things I can't really see together.

Lois: I know that's a little bit strange, but I think it's easier to understand when you think about it. When I first moved to D.C., I realized the music itself between Olympia and D.C. was really different, but the spirit of making the music was somewhat similar. I think there are a lot of parallels between Dischord and K in terms of putting out records that you really believe in and that you support, that are joined in a way, somewhat philosophically although that's a little too lofty a term to describe it. So when I became friends with Ian I started to realize that even though musically we don't really have a lot in common, our love of music comes out in the same way, the scene's commitment to independence and honesty and a good ethic. Yeah, he was really happy to do that. I thought it was pretty funny that he was so stoked about doing that but it was really nice.

You've been loosely associated with riot grrrl, but your music is virtually nothing like any of the bands normally associated with riot grrrl.

Lois: Part of it is just geographic. I was around in both of those scenes that were kind of considered the riot grrrl birthplaces, Olympia and D.C., and for a long time I did this all girl radio show called "Your Dream Girl." I just have been interested for many, many years in women making music and was always trying to encourage people to play and still do. I feel a lot of more of my mission has to do with that rather than entertain people. I think riot grrrl seems to be a movement kind of created outside of what really happened. I think what really happened is people began to feel more self-confident and met in groups of people where they felt safe to talk about different issues and stuff like that. I've already read about three pronouncements that riot grrrl is dead and I'm just kind of like, "Well, whatever." Whoever said it was alive, whoever said it was dead, it's a moot point.

Gosh, I guess I'd better start writing letters to my friends and let them know. I mean, they have their chapters and everything and maybe someone should tell them riot grrrl is dead. That would at least be polite.

Lois: I know. Like, "Oh, didn't anyone send out a press release?"

I'm sure I got something from Sony about that in the mail.

Lois: That's true. Women in rock or whatever, looking at the new Rolling Stone that has this article on women in rock, at first I was mad. I was like "Oh God, this is so dumb! This is really stupid!" And then I realized I don't care if all those losers who read Rolling Stone think Liz Phair and Kim Gordon are what women in rock is all about because I don't want them to destroy my scene where women in rock are really proliferating and doing amazing stuff. I'm saying I don't mind if the media misinterprets it anymore because I saw what happened with riot grrrl and I would rather cruise at a lower altitude and not be able to be detected by their radar. That's kind of how I would like it to be.

So why do you do music? What got you into it?

Lois: Living in Olympia in the early '80s, there was a magazine here which later became Option, and Bruce Pavitt was doing the Sub Pop fanzine and tapes and Calvin was just beginning to put out cassettes on the newly formed K label. There was just a lot of creativity and amazing stuff going on and I just kind of became really excited about it. At first I was like "Oh, I don't know how to play music and this is all really great but it doesn't matter because I don't do it." Then I figured out that it wasn't really that hard to do so that kind of inspired me to play. That and doing my radio show when I was just listening to a lot of women in rock and roll and it was great. It made me think, "Well, that's what I want to do." I kind of was a late starter, a late bloomer as it were. I didn't start playing guitar until I was about 24 and that was years and years ago. See where it gets you?

Going back to the style, it doesn't sound like you had any "professional" training.

Lois: Yes, that is correct. I actually bought a guitar because I thought it was pretty and then after I had it for a while, I figured, "Oh, I guess I have this thing, I might as well learn how to play it." A friend that knew how to play gave me chord diagrams. There was a really famous punk poster from England and it might have been for the Damned. I'm not really sure, but it shows three chords, G, A and D and says "Here's three chords, now start a band." I kind of used that as my inspiration.

Guided by Voices - Under the Bushes Under the Stars CD (Matador)

The heat and exhaust were shimmering off the asphalt like a hypothetical quark trying to decide whether to reveal itself as I drove to the record store to get this little gem. I could feel my stomach clenching in anticipation and fear, it's pretty much the same thing. See, I have become a GbV acolyte. I walk the streets, wearing nothing more than robes made of coarse cloth and sandals woven from reeds, spreading the GbV gospel. Why? It's something to do, I guess. Or maybe it's that GbV constructs amazingly historically informed pop songs. Maybe it's because they tear music apart, steal the best bits from forgotten tunes, and then put it all back together again so it sounds brand new, but still stunningly familiar. I'm not sure there's any way to adequately explain GbV's magic and I'm not sure there should be. I've been sitting here for almost an hour now, staring at this disc, afraid to put in my CD player because, after the "Tiger Bomb" EP and "Alien Lanes," I'm wondering exactly how they can keep improving. It's now about two weeks after I wrote that. I'm not wondering anymore. "UTBUTS," although differing drastically from their more lo-fi efforts in its rich sonic palette, carries all the majestic chords, hooks and sentiments of great rock. Songs like "Atom Eyes," "No Sky," "Lord of Overstock," "Your Name is Wild" and the amazing "Ghosts of a Different Dream" raise the stakes in GbV's musical poker game yet again. Everyone else has folded, no one can even come close to competing with this hand. So the Sad Freaks sit alone at their green felt table, in a card game only they can play in, much less win. They make rock criticism irrelevant because their music is its own critique and most astute analysis of postmodern rock; it simultaneously dissects pop history and plays with it like researchers use language fragments to try to reconstruct a lost tongue. In short, GbV are the premier linguists of rock, inventing a new vocabulary for people to use many years from now. They've made it real again, they've made it fun again and I can't thank them enough for doing so.

Idaho - Three Sheets to the Wind CD (Caroline Records)

Distorted and dissonant music, full of mood and the blues, describing pain and heartbreak, love and loss, loneliness and long, dark nights when the only sound breaking the silence is the rain pattering against a window and the only solace is a half empty bottle of cheap gin.

Kepono - Skin CD (Quarterstick Records)

Wake up kids! Green Day is safe and cute. You can play them in the car on the way to the mall with your mom. This band will put you back on your parents' shitlist and with repeated listening, you'll come to value it more than that dayglo pager you bought to make yourself feel important. Kepono (says here it's pronounced "Kee-pone") is a trio from Richmond, VA. Michael Bishop and Tim Harris provide the yells, yelps and two-part harmonies which serve as a nice focal point for the calculated musical mayhem that occurs on this 10 song CD.

Guitars, bass and drums come on like hornets in attack formation - weaving and circling; sleek, dark and dangerous. Track five, "Ed's Sad Party," showcases Ed Trask's drumming and "Idiot Bull Drop" begins with a melancholy piano and eases into a hypnotic segment. Then the bludgeoning begins again. Sometimes the vocals can fall a bit short of the music, but all in all, this is a good release. I'd like to see them on a bill with Jesus Lizard, Tanner and Hemlock. (JOSH)

Kiss It Goodbye - She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not ... CD (Revelation Records)

Anguish, misery, despair - dudes, take some fucking Prozac.

Legendary Jim Ruiz Group - "Mill Amsterdam" b/w "Milneapolis," "Jody" (Milny Fresh)

I still can't figure out if this is a joke or not. Is someone fucking with me, or did five semi-normal looking college students actually write and record this music with the intention of making money? It sounds like sixties theme music with a heavy dose of lounge style polka thrown in as well. Oh, I get it, it's the "we'll be cool be being wacky and different 'cause after all, we're college students" mentality. Somebody throw these kids into the pit at the Down By Law show. (Note: "How to Run a Fanzine" by Tom Parker. 1. Collect all of the cool albums by cool bands that you really dig. 2. Keep them and enjoy. 3. Give everything else to some knucklehead who is willing to work for free. 4. While you're rocking out to Dave Smalley and Co., sneak over to your contributor's house with a twelve pack and spy through his window. 5. Enjoy your beer and laugh your ass off as he sits at his desk listening to The Legendary Jim

Earth Crisis - Destroy the Machine CD (Victory Records)

As much as I like this band and their crunchy vegan sXe and their message, I can only see the members playing college shit rock in penance for taking themselves too seriously five years from now. A great record, but put your fists down. (DAVE)

Everything But The Girl - Walking Wounded CD (Atlantic Records)

EBTG, a band which focused on bossa novas, gentle acoustic tunes and lilting love songs in the past, adopted the muted, understated tones of Goldie's ambient-jungle fusion and created something sensual, erotic and blissful. This is the sound of drowning in an emotion so powerful it can't be apprehended or understood, much less described. This is the sound of need, of longing, of walking the streets in the middle of the night thinking about someone who will never love you back or love you again. It's the sound of every door that ever slammed as someone left, every lingering caress on someone else's cheek and every drop of rain that ever fell to mask someone's tears.

Feedtime - Billy CD (Amphetamine Reptile)

Scott told me this was like Motörhead on Quaaludes. He was right. (PHILIP)

Furious George - Goes Ape! CD EP (Lookout!)

1-2-3-4!!!! (DAVE)

Goldie - Timeless CD (ffrr)

Fusing ambient and junglist textures, Goldie rocks the nation like Rushmore, taking a pick-and-skittering, stuttering beats to music and reifying, rebuilding it in his image and the way he feels it should be. He's remaking songs which are unclassifiable because they are everything - the sound of life, of sleep, of love, of sex, fear and death all in one. The express emotions which can't be explained, evoke feelings which may be best left untapped and call forth deeply buried memories of days past when time dragged on into infinity, into an eternal sunset over an ocean as birds wheeled in the sky and warm sand drifted between toes.

Guided by Voices - Tigerbomb EP (Matador)

I'm going to try to review this 7" without praising it to the point where hyperbole and admiration become inseparable, but I think the re-recorded version of "Game of Pricks" is going to make that impossible. See, I'm rapidly coming to believe that GbV is the most brilliant pop band since the Beatles. They reconstruct pop music; they reify it. They restore all those promises broken by years of major label interference in simple, glorious blasts of pop history beamed straight into the brain at 45 r.p.m., transferring secret musical histories from 4 tracks to the soul and I still don't understand how the fuck they do it. I'm rapidly getting obsessed with trying to apprehend how one band can manage to take even their own songs and rework them in such a fashion as to make them even more soaring, even more magnificent, and still have a down to earth, "Aw shucks" attitude when they're doing nothing less than radicalizing the form and showing people that the best bands in the world are, truly, recording in basements. I'm primarily only going to talk about "Game of Pricks," which is the song that I've been listening to for about 20 minutes now. That means 10 trips from my desk to the stereo to put the needle at the beginning of the song. Again. And again for that matter. It's filled with power chords, ringing notes, soaring riffs that strip away all the bullshit and reveal what is really at stake in pop music these days. It's not about noise for the sake of noise anymore; it's not about being less commercial than other bands and intentionally obscure. What GbV discovers in these two minutes, and the rest of the band's recorded history for that matter, is that pop can still be about what it was always about - an innocent, unironic expression of those things which all people share: love, fear, loneliness, rejection, trying to cope with an increasingly nonsensical world, regardless of anything else. I think I'm down for the count on hyperbole, but fuck if I care. This is the music of my life. This is the jackpot of pop: the payoff that the Las Vegas of music always suggested was possible but never spewed out of a slot machine/jukebox; the alpha and the omega; fuck it, it's the apotheosis. The fact that the rest of this is delightfully weird is just a bonus. Oh, by the way, "Dodging Invisible Rays," in its own mid-1960s, Beatlesque psychedelic fashion, is almost as good and if GbV were a lesser band, might be their magnum opus.

Issue 4

I've never really been able to say much about the fourth issue. The interviews were okay, the reviews were okay. The theme of food ran through it a bit, but it certainly wasn't much of a theme issue as such things go. Perhaps my fondest memory of this zine is packing all the copies and my stapler up and going over to my girlfriend's house. We ate dinner at Denny's and then stapled and folded for hours while an overhead fan softly whirled in the background.

Rhythm Collision

Rhythm Collision, subtitled The First Church of Cosmo Kramer.

H: We have like three videotapes full of Seinfeld episodes. We just sit around and have a laugh-fest once in a while. Break out the Premium crackers. ...

C: You should try Zestas. They're buttery.

H: For those of you who aren't worried about watching your weight. If you aren't watching your weight, I would go with Zestas.

C: Well, when you're on the road and you're losing 10 pounds a day, Zestas are a good supplement.

Why do you play punk rock?

H: ... It's the only thing we goddamn know how to play.

C: No choice there.

H: That was the whole attraction of punk in the beginning. It's the opposite of the whole rock star thing where guys are playing scales, they've been playing for 13 years and they have 10 guitars and all these bullshit effects, whereas in punk, anyone can pick up a guitar and within two months, you can make music and it's just as legitimate as all that Eddie Van Halen guitar wanking bullshit with 16 different tempo changes and big arena cock rock pants. It's just more direct. It used to be, although I guess punk is big now, you could go to a small club and you and 200 people could get within five inches of the band, like at Soul Kitchen, and have a really good time. Try to go to the San Diego Sports Arena and go see any band there and try to get that close to the band where you can actually throw things at them when they suck. That's what punk is about. It's supposed to put everybody on the same level. That's how it should be.

Tilt

What's up with the Elvis Presley sign you're carting around in the back of your van?

J: We were driving through Tupelo, Mississippi, Elvis' birthplace, about a week ago and there was a freak tostorm. We were driving a brand new 1995 Ford van, it was a rental van, and we hit a patch of ice on a bridge and lost control of the vehicle and went onto the median and rolled the van upside down and knocked over that sign, so we brought it with us.

So you seriously listen to Bob Seger?

J: I grew up on Bob Seger. Like I said, I'm 32 years old and I grew up in Detroit in the 70's, so Detroit in the 70's was the MC5, the Stooges, naturally, and Bob Seger. Alice Cooper and all that stuff was coming over the radio, loud and clear.

How do you think having a female vocalist and lyricist makes Tilt different?

J: ... It's not all coming from white male suburban kids that went to high school together. I'm not saying that's bad, I'm just saying we come from totally different backgrounds. Like Vince was saying, I'm from Detroit, Cinder's from Nebraska, Vince is from California, so is Gabe, and there's just totally different situations and backgrounds ...

C: We're not all four white skaters in their early 20s playing Bad Religion hardcore.

V: I'm not even totally white.

C: Yeah. I'm not even totally male.

"...it's the only thing we goddamn know how to play." harlan, rhythm collision

Issue 5

Issue 5 was the P Issue. Hell if I know how it happened, but it seemed like a good idea at the time. Jon Ghinoli from Pansy Division and Molly, Chris and Rop from the Pee-Chees were great sports about the whole thing. Frankly, I owe them an apology because asking questions about things that start with the letter P was just a bad idea. The interviews were better than in Issue 4, but, like Issue 4, the source files are currently missing in action. I retranscribed parts of the Palace interview. I initially thought it was a bad interview, but when Palace's publicist called me to tell me it was the best one she had read, I thought somewhat better of it. As a final note about Issue 5, Dave Smalley told me that it must be one of his daughter's favorite issues - since she chewed his copy up while teething. I always said I was doing it for the kids. I never specified an age range.

Palace

It seems like most of your songs are about people who have had bad luck.

P: Yeah. There just seemed to be a growing coldness in the world as years went by and people were falling apart.

When I first heard your records, I thought about people like Robert Johnson, Hank Williams Sr., Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family. Is that the kind of tradition you stem from?

P: I don't know. Those are old records, aren't they? I don't know where you get records like that. We never had any old records, we just had new records and the radio and sometimes old songs that people knew by heart, but we just knew what was new music. I mean, I've heard people talk about those people as being big influences, and I guess they probably wrote a lot of famous songs, but I don't know where you get those records. It seems like any copies you'd find would be real worn out by now.

Why do you play the style of music you play?

P: I guess it's a handicap. It's what I grew up with.

“i’ve never put out a song
that i’m ashamed of. there’s
always something in a song
i’ve written that i really
find fits what i wanted it to
do. it hits the emotional
chord i felt was right.”
dave smalley

This is some of the shittiest, least professional and amateurish punk rock I've ever heard. It is utterly without redeeming qualities, features recycled HC riffs refashioned from old punk records and rocks like a stone motherfucker ripped to the gills on sixers of Lone Star beer, cheap uppers and cough syrup.

DFL - Grateful CD (Eptaph)

(Short review)

Crap.

(Long review)

Total crap.

(Unedited review)

This sucks. How can one band put out so much bullshit and still have fans? Masters of hypnosis or subliminal marketing. Crap. Total crap. Not worth the effort to break it with a hammer. (ROSS)

DM Bob & the Deficits - Bad With Wilmen CD

Fuckin' rawkably, the kind of music which makes people rob convenience stores for a case of Bud to take along with their date for a romantic evening of monster truck rallies. No, I mean a romantic evening of gator wrestling matches. This lo-fi trio brings out the uncouth, ass-pinching swaggard in even the most sensitive of indie rockers with its genuinely soulful pleas for a night of lovin' under the crisp blue moon in the local trailer park. (ALEX)

Don Caballero - Don Caballero 2 CD (Touch and Go)

I was happy when I looked into the promo pile and saw this. I had to give this CD first listen just to see what these guys from Pennsylvania have been up to. Turns out it's more of the same. Right on! Loud, dissonant and busy as hell on most of the tracks, drowning on some (there's a table saw solo in there somewhere). If you like your music with lots of hooks and over the top melodies or vocals, don't buy this disc. Don Caballero can't bother themselves with such nonsense. Nope, just precise and rhythmic drumming, solid bass lines and some impressive guitar structuring and I don't mean wanking away here. Don Caballero is one of the best headbaches you'll ever have. I'm thinking it might be fun to tape this, put "Mean Man's Dream" by Gore on the other side and take acid and drive up and down Palomar Mountain with it blaring out the windows and I'll turn off my headlights and cross my eyes and - naw, I have to work tomorrow. (JOSH)

The Dragons - Pain Killer CD (Scan-O-Rama)

This album is the antithesis to everything Lou Barlow stands for. It's the antidote, the of-fashioned cure for what-the-fuck-ever ails you. Enough self-indulgent snivelcore and th' hell with it. It's time to rock. Nothin' fancy here - warmed over Johnny Thunders riffs and a dose of drag rock - but the Dragons pull it off with such nonchalance, such effortlessness, that it transcends apparent limitations of the style and becomes its apotheosis, surpassing its predecessors (yeah, I know, sacrilege, but fucked if I care. I'll make my peace with Johnny when I see him) and yet still building on the foundation. It's historically informed but stands out of time and place, just like the best rock should.

Steve Earle - I Feel Alright CD (Warner Brothers)

Lots of you probably couldn't give two fucks about country music. And that's totally understandable, unless you're talking about proto-punks like Johnny Cash or Steve Earle. The Nashville establishment rejects Earle outright because he was once hooked on heroin and crack, and no self-respecting country artist does the same drugs as minorities, right? In big hat country, you chase downers with Jack Daniels and beat your wife, just don't put a needle in your arm like those fellers over in the projects. But one has to suspect that Nashville keeps Earle out for another reason - he's a genius who doesn't fit in with pretty boys like Garth or beer-bellied yahoos like Hank Jr. On "I Feel Alright," (Earle's first release since getting out of jail on a possession charge), the troubled troubadour makes up for lost time in a big way. The title track splits a hefty loogie in the face of the industry and the weasels who currently dominate the charts with their video-ready spew. Make no mistake about it - THIS IS PUNK in every sense of the word. Well, except for maybe the Beatlesque harmonica in "More Than I Can Do." (ERIC)

Reviews

Here's a blanket review that applies to (by our best guess) about 90% of the music out there. Feel free to copy it into press releases at will. (%album name) by (%band name here) sucks. It's a derivative rehash of (%hip_influence_du_jour_1) and (%hip_influence_du_jour_2), which utterly fails in its attempt to shamelessly ape (%hip_influence_du_jour_3). IF (%album label)=major label THEN sentence_last=Sell outs. IF (%album label)=indie label THEN sentence_last=Sycophants. IF (%album label)=? (indie label owned (wholly/partially) by major/distributed by major/affiliated with major/having lunch with major) THEN sentence_last=Cheap whores.

Abdell - New Moon CD (Real World/Caroline)

Let's start by proposing that "punk" is not a form, but rather a function; it is not a blueprint but rather an aesthetic sensibility. Let us also assume that punk has less to do with style than content, less appearance than ideas. While this contradicts the semiological importance of symbols like safety pins and leather jackets, it also frees the boundaries to include radicalized music which carries the same ideas, yet doesn't fit into the rubric. Abdell's music is about as far from punk as it's possible to get and still scream about the exploitation of women and complacency, featuring sentiments such as "Wake up, idiots! Who sent you to sleep in that way? Your sleep is humiliating. One day there will be a big storm which will uproot you!" Better than Bad Religion's Atlantic debut by a factor of 10.

Both Worlds - Beyond Zero Gravity CD EP (Another Planet Records)

NYC yo-core from some vets of the CBGB's matinee scene, vocalist John Joseph (formerly of the Cro-Mags) foremost (literally and figuratively) among them. I don't think I have enough tattoos to fully appreciate this.

Boys Life - Departures and Landfalls CD (Cargo)

There's a place for mundane background music in the world, but not in my house. (ADAM)

Chavez - Ride The Fader CD (Matador)

I feel bad discussing this album in terms of rock power, given the negative connotations that phrase carries since Billy Corgan became infatuated with it and started masturbating to its vision, but "Ride The Fader" is one of the most mindfuckingly astonishing albums in recent memory; all crunchy riffs, drenched in melody and distortion and Matt Sweeney's plaintive voice. Maybe it's easier to understand this album in terms of a relationship - parts of it are like the euphoric first days, weeks, months. Then parts of it get wistful, wistful setting in. Then there's the rest - hurt, blinded, bleeding. But "Ride The Fader" is reassuring, comforting in its narcotic riffs and soothing. It's a warm blanket and a cup of hot cocoa with a dash of arsenic thrown in to kill the pain one last time.

Chisel - 8 A.M. All Day CD (Gern Blandsten)

This makes me want to smoke and drink too much, especially "Looking Down" a song which pretty accurately describes my last relationship. The only problem is that I quit smoking and drinking which leaves me here with this CD and a gnawing ache in my gut and nothing to numb the feeling. Like the man said in "Breaking Up With Myself" - "There will be days I'll forget you! They'll be the days that I make it through."

Cockeyed Ghost - Neverest CD (Paradigm Records)

As long as labels release albums like this, zinesters will make money selling them.

Deadbolt - Tijuana Hit Squad CD (Cargo)

The self proclaimed "scariest band in the world" has never been my ball of wax. It's never been my flavor of gum, it doesn't run the flag up my pole, it doesn't float my boat, and it certainly doesn't stick around my CD player for very long. This is Deadbolt. If that works for you, go for it. (ADAM)

The Derelicts - Going Out Of Style 1986-1990 CD (eMPty Records)

Issue 6

Issue 6 felt like a rebirth for STM in many ways. I had the privilege of talking to Matt Freeman for a while, and got to spend about an hour hanging around downtown San Diego with J Church in the middle of the night. To this day, I still remember things that Matt said, and I still remember the guys in J Church cracking jokes. It was a great contrast - talking to Matt made me realize that other people felt just as lonely as I did. Talking to J Church made me realize how easily a band can get along after playing together for a long time. I can't pick a favorite between the two. I can only say that each of them struck me in different ways, and each of them still means as much to me as they did when they were originally printed.

Rancid

So how's life been treating you besides being on the road and things?

M: That is my life, dude. That's my whole fucking life. I don't know. I'm on tour, I'm in my band, that's what I do, you know what I'm saying?

What else is there?

M: Nothing really. Not for me. It's sad, isn't it, when you think about it? My car's in storage and my cat went to live with my ex-girlfriend and that's about it.

These songs seem to have a positive edge, like in "The War's End," "Now it's time for you to leave home." I was talking to a friend about the Clash once, and I said the Clash were about soul survival, and it seems like Rancid is as well. Would you agree with that?

M: Yeah, I'd agree with that. I mean, that's what it's all about. Music, to us, being in a punk band or whatever, has always been about something to do other than your real fucking life almost. You know, you work all day and then you're in a band, I mean, it's what you do. It's the way you have fun, it's something great, it's something that's your own. I mean, it helped me stop being alienated. I don't know what the hell I'd be if I didn't have music. I'd probably be one of these post office guys who just wakes up one day and kills his whole fucking office because he's so pissed off. It's always been a release for me. I think it's been that way with all of us and I think that's why we get along so well is because we're like that. I mean, I didn't really have any friends when I was a kid except Tim. We didn't have any friends since we had each other and that was about it, you know? We got into music and that's what we started doing, you know what I mean? So yeah, you're right. I'd say that's a good comparison. I try to treat punk honestly and intelligently because I get sick of hearing that it's noise and doesn't mean anything. It does.

M: I agree with you. I think it's very important, it's very important in my life and think it's also good you're treating it that way. I don't want to blow smoke up your ass, but I really wish half the people I talked to were as intelligent as you. You really listened to the fucking record. I mean, most of these guys are like, "What do you think about the Clash comparisons? What did Madonna send that picture for? Why did you turn down the \$1.5 million?" You know what I'm saying? Yeah, I agree with you.

All that stuff is irrelevant. What's at the heart of it are the songs; the things that went into the songs, the actual music, what's on the record, the things you can listen to.

M: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah, exactly. I should take you on fucking tour with me. Jesus Christ, yeah, that's exactly what I try to fucking say. That's all that fucking matters is the goddamn songs and the experiences and the communication. I mean, that's what punk rock was always about to me - the communication, fucking something you grab on to. I mean, when I was a kid, I was an alienated little fat kid, you know what I'm saying? I got big in high school and people started fucking with me, but you know, it's like the same thing, you know what I mean? It's like it was my escape, it was my religion, it's what kept me from killing myself. You know what I'm saying? I totally agree with you and I think that can be in a lot of different kinds of music, even hard rock or metal or something. I think that same thought's there, people want to get away so I really don't trash it. I mean, some of the bands drive me nuts with the way they feel, but I mean, the emotion that kids get out of it, that people can get out of it, I think it's very important across the board, no matter what it is.

Yeah. Husker Du's "Zen Arcade" and "Warehouse" got me through high school. I just think this album may do the same for a kid sitting in the back of a math class right now.

M: And I hope it does because that's what bands like fucking X and the Specials and the Clash did for me. It's the same thing. I've got an X tattoo on my fucking arm.

What do you think about the profound effect music can have on someone's life?

M: I think it's very powerful on an individual level. I think that's what is important because you can preach all you want about all this fucking crazy shit, but it really comes down to what you're listening to on your record player at home. Like X. X did the same thing for me. You know that "Under the Big Black Sun"?

Hell yeah.

M: Yeah, you know that fucking record. I got the fucking cover tattooed on my fucking arm. I used to listen to that record, and I mean it's probably gotta be one of the most depressing records ever fucking made. I mean, fucking "Fucking with Mary" and all that shit about her sister, but there's one fucking song, the last song on the fucking record, you know, it's like, "Damn comes soon enough for the working class," na-na-na, that song? I can never remember the name of it. I'm really bad with names because I don't really read name titles, I just listen to the whole record. That song is fucking all about drinking real late at night and then going to work the next morning, and that fucking song, especially when I started working. I started working when I was 15, just fucking got me through so much shit. I go out, I'm a working class fucking Joe and these people are too. You know what I'm saying? All that other stuff, it was just great.

A-ha, "The Have Nots."

M: Yeah, "The Have Nots." That's what it is. I'm really bad. I even fuck up our own titles all the time. I have my own titles for our songs. I get up there and say "We're gonna play 'Crucify'" "Disorder and Disarray" Matt. "Oh yeah, 'Disorder and Disarray'" Or, "That one that starts with that chord!"

Well hell, I had to go check the vinyl for the song title.

M: Oh, you did? Okay. But I mean, I listened to that record. I mean, I still listen to that record. You know what I mean? But it made me feel great because these people are just like fucking me. I think it's very important. I'd love that. I hope that Rancid, I don't want to get all fucking self-prophesying. I hope that Rancid does that to some people and I know it does because I talk to people and they say it does. It makes me feel a little insecure because I don't think I'm very different, but, you know, you take what you can get. That's the whole thing about being honest and making good records. I mean, Rancid has always been, whatever you fucking say about us, "Oh, fuck those guys, they're on MTV. Oh, fuck those guys, they fucking danced with the devil with the major labels. Oh, fuck those guys, they go on a tour bus now. Oh, fuck those guys, they don't play my fucking punk rock club anymore," we've always been fucking honest and done what we've done and we've been up front about it. We've never ripped anybody off and I challenge anyone to say we have. They can call me up. We haven't. We've always tried to do good fucking business on the business end. We've always tried to make good, honest records and that's all we can fucking do. If we die on the vine after two years, so be it, but we'll still be making records. We'll still do what we gotta do.

Church

Okay, state your name and age for the record, as well as the instrument you play so I'll be able to transcribe this later.

Gardner: Sure. I'm Gardner, I play bass, and I don't know why, but I'm 27.

Lance: Well I know why, it's because you were born in 1967.

G: No, I don't know why you want to know.

Yeah, lately on the Internet, there are all these rumors - Ian Mackaye is married or dead, Jord from Propagandhi got shot, 35 billion different things.

R: I started that one.

L: Yeah, there's a rumor that I got killed in a car crash.

Dr. Livingston I presume?

L: I'm fine. Except my arm falls off.

You're remarkably sprightly for a dead person.

L: That's what they say. I read that myself because I read all punk all the time to see what's going down.

How to offend people at your own funeral

by Kali

One thing pisses me off so much I can hardly stand thinking about it: What happens to me after I die? I'm not talking life after death - you die, you're gone. Only someone in severe denial would think anything else. Once I fly headfirst into a semi at 75 miles an hour, the play is over. I get one last bow at my funeral, then being forgotten is all that remains.

It's the funeral that gets me. Once my remains get scraped off the pavement, I'm going to be massively rehabilitated and the idea makes my stomach twist because I can't defend myself. It's my worst nightmare. Isn't it yours? They take the earrings out, put makeup on the tattoo, put you in a suit and cut all your hair the same length. Then someone who never knew you will make all the people you hate feel comfortable by telling them you were never the person they were afraid you were. I cringe when I think about that. I want to leave as I lived: bitter, filled with malice; damning the hypocrites, idiots and self-serving pompous asses. It was my play, it's my curtain call and I want to moon the goddamn audience.

There are escapes: You could go out in a way that doesn't leave remains, like flying TWA, but that only saves you the indignity of being dressed like a clown while you're lied about. You could write a will and say you don't want a funeral but your next of kin aren't obliged to respect your wishes.

Maybe they will, but do you want to court on the day you die being the first time?

Besides, why waste such a great opportunity? Everyone you know, including all your relatives, will be there. Your boss will come. So will some of your teachers and professors. Every cockroach consciousness in your cosmos will be exuding greasiness and looking at your corpse with their satisfied little bug eyes. What better time to jump out of your coffin and spray around the intellectual bug killer?

(It just occurred to me that if you could stage your own death, you could literally jump out of your coffin at your own funeral but I figure that would be pretty difficult unless you live in a backwoods area where the town drunk doubles as the coroner. Even the L.A. coroner can figure out when someone isn't really dead and besides, they do surgery on your corpse without anesthesia. You would have to be really dedicated to go through that, though I don't want to discourage you if that's what you really want.)

I'm suggesting a last gesture from beyond the grave - one final "fuck you," a lingering finger from a dead hand. While a vicious rant against all the Cheez-Whiz personalities you know and have someone you trust read it at your funeral instead of a eulogy. Your opinion will be deluged when your subjects can't walk out without violating all the taboos and conventions they bowinely worship. They're stuck, they're offended and they'll talk about what a punk you were forever. What's not to love? Here are a few tips for delivering a few choice final words:

The Speaker: Whoever delivers the eulogy must be the biggest punk you know and regard disgust with complacent human sheep and cows as right and natural rather than psychopathic. They must think the only logical response to egregious stupidity is derision or giving into homicidal impulses. Their heart should swell with malice, spite and vulgarity on your behalf, because the people in that church are going to be more shocked than they have ever been. Choose a speaker who is large, quick or both, as someone may try to have them physically removed once they get really offensive. Remind your Voice, perhaps in a prologue, to gain control of the P.A. system before starting or they may be drowned out or switched off.

The Spoken Word: Keep it short. Don't give your audience time to realize what is going on, get enraged and form a lynch mob. Your speaker loses something if they have to scream your anathemas while dashing around the altar. If the speaker runs out of text before the audience comes out of shock, they can improvise and enlarge on themes you've already presented. Of course, one exquisite possibility is to have your speaker say to the audience: "This is what (insert your name here) thinks of you," show them a blank piece of paper, and walk off.

Make your words true and make them count. Specifics make your rant more interesting. If your highly popular 5th grade teacher was a complacent cow whose greatest interests were sitcoms and making sure you were properly brainwashed, say so. Curse your patronizing pig of a boss for his condescending pretense that his underpaid, exploited flunkies are "family." Tell your psychologist that you would probably still be alive if he hadn't meddled. Inform your geology professor that you told everyone he knows that he drinks himself stupid and fucks his students on weekend field trips, and that they laugh inwardly when he gives them that fake professional act. Burst their bubbles.

There is one downside to this delightful scenario - you won't get to see Dad's face as you tell him you think he's a cocksucker for buying his floozy second wife cars and furs instead of paying your child support, but so what? None of this will matter to you then. The pleasure is in the anticipation: Enjoy it. It will keep you sane.

Find a neighborhood record or book store to sell your zines. You will sell more this way. You can also sell them at shows. Attend book fairs, punk conventions and conferences. Try to carry a good variety of zines. Think about what others might be interested in getting and try to keep prices low, especially if you're just starting out.

Be prepared to see a lot of punk zines that look the same and other zines that make you wonder if it is a zine or not. Be prepared for shit and be critical, because you have to sell the thing and spend a lot of time writing a review and listing it. If you know a zine will flop, don't take any chances and don't waste your or the zine editor's time in sending them. All of this advice is helpful. I'm going on my third year of doing this thing and it has only been progress, progress, progress. There will be some slow points, but don't be discouraged. Lastly, don't expect to make a profit and rarely break even, so if you're going to do a zine distro do it for the love of zines not money. Have fun and good luck!

If anyone has any questions you can write to me at:

Primordial Soup Kitchen

Sean Guillory

PO Box 1312

Claremont, CA 91711-1312

guillory@ix.netcom.com

(Submissions to the catalog can be sent here also.)

Reference

Review Zines/Stores

Factsheet 5

PO Box 170099

San Francisco, CA 94117

Atomic Books

229 West Read St.

Baltimore, MD 21201

<http://www.atomicbooks.com>

Maximum Rockroll

PO Box 460760

San Francisco, CA 94146-0760

Quimby's Queer Store

1650 W. Division

Chicago, IL 60622

AK Press

PO Box 40682

San Francisco, CA 94140-0682

Usenet Groups:

alt.zines

alt.punk

alt.music.hardcore

Not exactly the first place to go for the most accurate information.

L: You know, and even besides that, everybody is so mean because they're in the safety of their home with their pseudonym so they can be as mean as they want. I can't believe it. I can understand if people don't like us, but some of the things people say are just harsh. It's so weird. It's like, "Yeah, okay, your parents bought you a home computer and set you up with America Online and you're talking shit about us? You've got America Online! You've got a bigger problem than I've got! I'm borrowing my friend's Netcom account!" Yeah, but at least you're going through a direct Internet hookup.

L: That's a SLIP account man!

The songs seem to take ordinary situations such as hanging out or getting together with a friend to drink beer or walking through the Financial District as a jumping off point to go into other things. How do you set that up?

L: Usually I'll start by writing about something that's going on. I used to write during work breaks. I'd jot things down that happened during the day. I'll take it as a diary entry. Then when it starts leading toward a direction, then I'll actually create a point. That's why a lot of songs don't go anywhere, so I dump them. They start walking down the street and they end walking down the street so I get rid of those songs. I write most songs now, usually, at night, right before I go to bed. That's when I spend a lot of time writing. Usually at the same time I'm filling out my diary, so a lot of it is just things that happened, people I know that are being affected by things, and I'll try to create some fantasy situation. I don't know how to explain that better, but I take something that's happening and fictionalize it and turn into something with at least some depth to it. Usually it's a matter of starting off with a basic story and then, depending on how I feel, seeing where it can lead at that point. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, but I write enough songs that if it doesn't, I just throw it away.

That's actually something I remember reading as a criticism about your music. It was some zine or another and the person said, "It's like, 'I was walking down the street, I smoked a cigarette and then I stopped in 7-11 and got a slurpee and walked home.'"

R: That was Jawbreaker, wasn't it?

G: Starting rumors.

L: That's true, but usually they have more of a point to them, maybe not to the average person listening to it, but at least to me. Right now I write a lot about people I know at Epicenter or other friends from work, so maybe to most people who don't know us it doesn't mean anything, but I never think in those terms anyway. When you start thinking in those terms, it's easy to start either preaching or being a little too self-conscious. So I just write everything in terms of being a diary entry or what I would like to read. I like to be able to enjoy my lyrics. To me, in a lot of ways, the lyrics certainly take more time to put together than the music.

G: Every time someone says something like that, there will be someone at a show who comes up and say, "Oh yeah, that song! I did this and this is my life!" And we're like "Oh, okay."

L: And they're both equally wrong. That's the problem. On the one hand, someone can be really upset that they don't understand what we're doing or what the point of our lyrics is and that's valid, but that's not what we're doing. And at the same time, someone will be exactly like what you were saying. "Oh man, I quit my job because of that song. I ran away from home because of something you wrote or I stopped eating meat because of your lyrics" and all this stuff, and I'm like, "Well, I don't remember any song saying do this." It's flattering which is what I'm sure their intention is, but at the same time that's missing the point too. I'm certainly not trying to tell anybody what to do because I wouldn't want that responsibility. It freaks me out when people say that, because some kid who was a teenager at the time was like, "Yeah, I ran away from home because of this song." I'm like, "Dude, don't fuck your life up because of me," you know? Or certainly don't tell me that's why you did it. It's too much for me to deal with. I'm just some guy.

You cannibalize your own work?

G: Hey, then it'd be another 7.

L: Yeah!

R: Another 7, down the drain.

L: Really, I mean, "Flip Your Wig" is basically "New Day Rising" in a different order.

Yeah, with a little slower tempo.

L: Everybody plagiarizes a little bit from everybody. We steal from everybody.

G: Proudly.

L: Yeah. When you start stealing from bands like Pavement, you're inadvertently stealing from

“that’s all that fucking
matters is the goddamn
songs and the experiences
and the communication.”
matt freeman

the Beatles or Creedence or stealing from a lot of different things. Maybe we're taking it to a ridiculous proportion by stealing from ourselves. It's unconscious, but it's going to happen. It's that or drastically change your style, which I think would be ridiculous.

So I guess the next thing I should ask you about is "The Precession Of Simulacra."

That doesn't seem like a title people might expect from a punk band.

L: You say it very well.

I've read Baudrillard.

G: Yeah, me too.

L: Baudrillard-what?

Uh, he's, like, a French dude.

G: Oh, cool.

So is there any postmodern theory behind that, anything from lit crit or Roland Barthes or people like that?

L: Not so much that. I mean, there's certain books that I feel affect everything, like "Simulations." It's one of those books where you read it, that and "Ecstasy Of Communication," and if it means anything to you, it's going to mean enough that it's going to really affect your life. It's going to change your concept of life - media, political landscapes, boundaries, everything. So to me it was a really heavy book to read and it really influenced me a lot. That, and "The Revolution Of Everyday Life," which is an old Situationist book. Those two have had a bigger impact on me than anything. I've read other stuff. I've read some Derrida and Foucault and all this other shit, but those books in particular have a more heavy effect, and also because that 10" was supposed to be the first in a series of three and it's not really happening. It's somewhat influenced by the character of the songs. The first one is "Precession Of Simulacra" - this sounds too much like a concept record - but the idea is that there's a song where the lyrics are entirely taken directly from an interview with an actress. Right, "Jennifer Jason Leigh."

L: Right. There's that and there's a song that's entirely about where candles come from and the writing on a candle and stupid shit like that. It's too complicated to explain, but also the idea of having an old, old live song that has nothing to do with what's happening now but gives depth to the record in a weird way. So to me, that tied into the idea of simulations, blah blah. The next 10", which is coming out soon, is called "The Agony Of Alienation and the Ecstasy Of Communication." It's hard to explain, but the lyrics are revolving around more personal issues and fucked up relationship things and all this crazy shit. There was going to be a third one but it was getting way too stupid and conceptual for me from a songwriter's perspective I suppose. Besides which, it seemed really dumb.

I've got a couple of last questions. Is there any question you wish someone would have asked you so you could get a chance to set the record straight or just talk about or something like that, that no one has ever asked?

G: I'm just surprised that more people don't give a shit, like, how come you re-release all your songs on different formats and stuff like that. I'm not saying I wish they would, I'm just saying I'm surprised they never do. Also, this wasn't J Church, this was Cringer and we were touring during the Gulf War, I was really surprised no one, especially since we were with Citizen Fish who are ex-Subhumans and are so political, bothered to even ask why we thought it was worth driving across country in this van with horribly bad gas mileage to play music while there's this war going on for oil and stuff. Besides that, no one even asked what we thought about it at all or anything.

L: It's weird though. In interviews in the mail or that I talk to about that shit, people have this impression of us like we're super-Crass, intellectual, blah blah blah, like we're that hard to interview, but we don't know shit. We don't know any more than anybody else does as is evident to anybody who's ever interviewed us.

R: We're full of it in other words.

L: Yeah, we're basically full of ourselves and people are weird about that. It's really fun because I think that for a band that has turn-outs like we do and shows like we do and tours like we do, it's pretty weird how few interviews we do overall. I mean, nobody wants to interview us, nobody wants to talk to us. Maybe they just don't give a shit.

"maybe we're taking it to a ridiculous proportion by stealing from ourselves." Lance hahn

Hey Man, You Wanna Distro My Zine?

The hardest part of doing a mailorder isn't getting customers, putting together a catalog or even getting postage money. The hardest part is deciding whether to take a zine or not. If you get a well known zine and you know it is constantly good, well hell, that's easy, bring that baby on board! If it's something unknown, it takes some pondering. Believe it or not, the hardest thing is rejecting a zine. You're basically telling someone their zine sucks. When I first started PSK, I wrote an excuse for each zine I rejected. This was really hard because you know when the person reads it, you're immediately dubbed an asshole. After a while, I just started sending out form letters with the option of sending a SASE to get a written explanation. This worked out well because I didn't have to explain every time why I rejected so and so's zine. Now I'm turning back to writing rejections. I don't really like form letters, so what makes me think others will? You can use form letters, they're easy and all you have to do is stuff it in an envelope and seal it. Give the option of an explanation, zine editors like criticism to make their zine better. If they don't, well, they should. When you accept a zine, send a letter explaining your terms and how many copies (form letters are the only way to do this), and a form for them to fill out their address, zine title and number, how many copies, etc. I stole this idea from Quinby's and Atomic Books because it makes it ten times easier to keep track of records.

Catalog 101

The best way to get people to submit their zine is to already have a small catalog already in the works. The chances are if you want to run a zine distro you either have a zine yourself or know people who do. Put a friend's zine on the catalog. It shows people you have something going and it helps out a friend. Along with sending requests for zines you need to have a policy explaining your method of payment, when you're going to pay, what you're going to do with unsold copies (if you're going to send them back or not) and how many copies you might take. If you're doing consignment you need to give a percentage of payment. I pay 50% of the cover price. Other places might pay in zines, trades, or postage. All this information is essential for an editor to know.

Now that you have some zines, you need to make a catalog. Again, there are many different ways to do this, some more effective than others. The way I do it is basically review the zine like you would in any other zine, except it's always going to be a good review. Other people just like to list the subjects of articles and others if it is a music zine, for example, just a list of bands. I prefer doing the long review because it gives a better description of what is in the zine. A couple of words describing a zine I've never heard of has never done it for me. I've found this way of listing is more effective. Some other tips on making a catalog is to make it presentable, like a zine itself. Print pictures of the zine covers, have articles on zines or interviews with the editors you carry. The AK Press and Atomic Books catalogs are a good example. This will give people more of a sample or what you carry.

To distribute your catalog, send a copy of it in every mailing you do, even if it's to your grandma. You never know. Maybe she'll be into buying zines. You can also post stuff on alt.zines and other newsgroups on the internet. What I do is instead of posting a whole catalog, because no one is going to sit there and read it on the computer, I put a short message saying I have a zine mailorder and if anyone wants a copy of the catalog for them to email me. Make sure you keep a list of people you've emailed a catalog to, so you can send them new versions every time you update it. It is also advisable to let them know they are on a mailing list and they have the option of being removed from it. That way nasty messages will be reduced at a minimum. If you are going to post on the internet, do not spam (sending one message to every newsgroup in the universe). Make sure your message is appropriate for the newsgroup. Alternative and punk groups are good ones to solicit. The regular mail is the same as email. Keep a list of people so you can mail them catalogs. This costs a lot of postage, but what I have done to remedy that is save all the loose change I have. You will be surprised, I've taken a bag on nickels to the post office at two in the morning and sat there for fifteen minutes popping nickels in to the machine totalling twenty bucks in stamps and I never missed a cent of it! Raid those coin jars kiddies. The response to catalogs is slow, but you will get results.

Tips For the Young Aspiring Entrepreneur

When filling orders and answering submissions try to do it ASAP. I fill orders in two days, that way you won't lose the order and the customer will get their zines faster. Some mailorders take forever for whatever reason and I personally don't like waiting a month for zines. I lag on answering submissions because I'm lazy.

How to DIY

Zine Mail-orders: The Vanguard of the Zine Revolution

By Sean Guillory

In the Beginning there was Zine.

If the 7" is the staple for punk music, the zine is the staple for the underground press. Zines are the mode of news, communication and pleasure reading for most of the punk scene and fringe crowd. The only problem is they aren't readily accessible. You can't exactly go to the neighborhood grocery store and pick one up like you would the Weekly World News or Reader's Digest. You really can't even find any at the best of the best independent book stores or newsstands. If you want to get zines, you either have to find a place that reviews them, a la Factsheet 5 and Maximum Rockroll, or purchase them at Tower Records. There is another way, a way which is growing bigger and bigger - the zine mail-order. When I got the idea to do Primordial Soup Kitchen, I had no idea there were underground mailorders for zines like there are for punk records. I knew of only a few from ads in MRR and Factsheet 5. After looking into it, I found places like AK Press in San Francisco, which publishes books and distros zines, Atomic Books in Baltimore and Quimby's in Chicago. Much like when I started doing a zine, I found there are a whole bunch of people out there doing something similar. Zine mail-orders are still few and far between, but more are cropping up all the time. Recently I saw a list of about thirty small distros. Still, there is no comparison to the number of small mailorder record distros coming from ads in MRR.

The Future of Zine Proliferation?

I don't think zines will ever be completely centralized under mailorders, so zines like Factsheet 5, which reviews thousands of zines every issue, will always be the main zine marketplace. Sending money from a review straight to the person who does the zine will always be the number one way. There are many advantages to this because the editor knows exactly where their zine is going and there is more of an intimate relationship with the readers. The drawback is for the reader, who has to send ten letters to get ten zines. Zine railroads are there to remedy this problem. A zine mailorder allows a person to order many zines from just one place. Zine distros help in the proliferation of zines in the underground. The question is how do you run a zine mailorder?

Cash up Front vs. Consignment

There are basically two types of zine mailorders - ones paying cash up front and ones paying on consignment. Cash up front involves less time and waste for the zine distributor and editor alike. The distro doesn't have to keep any paperwork or inventory lists to keep track of who and how much you owe, the zines are purchased at a wholesale price and the editor gets the ever so needed money. Zine editors like this method because you don't have to worry about the distro disappearing off the face of the earth and you never getting paid. A drawback for the distro is you might be stuck with copies of a zine you can't get rid of.

Consignment involves more paper work, but is ideal if the distributor doesn't have the funds to buy zines up front. I do PSK like this and most mail-orders work this way as well. Consignment is done like this - a zine editor sends you copies of the zine and every few months or when they all sell you send them money for the copies sold. To do this correctly, the distributor has to have their shit together. You have to keep a good inventory of what you have and make sure you send everyone the money. The worst thing for an editor is for someone to take copies of their zine on consignment and never hear from that person again. The editor loses out on time and money, both valuable commodities in zine publishing.

Hey Man, Can I Distro Your Zine?

Once you decide what method you're going to use to pay zinesters, you have to get some zines to sell. There are various ways to do this. One way is to scour MRR and Factsheet 5's zine reviews and look for zines which sound interesting and worth carrying. Send letters to the editors explaining what you are doing and you want to distro their zine. This is hit or miss because zine editors are very skeptical from being screwed over so many times. Some will respond though. Another way is to run ads in zines, but that can be expensive. You can also send fliers in a friend's or your own mailings or post stuff on the Internet calling for people to send their zines. Lots of people are looking for zine distro, so the response can be fairly good.

Issue 7

Issue 7 was a breakthrough. Buz redesigned STM. I interviewed Karate, Pavement and Down By Law. In some ways, STM has been a Down By Law fanzine that ran interviews with other bands when DBL was between albums. This issue and its companion make 10 issues for STM, and four interviews with Dave Smalley. What can I say? I love the music.

Down By Law

It seems like a lot of these songs are straight from the heart. How much of it is based on personal experience and how much on stories, things you've heard, things like that? D: When you're a songwriter, it's a little of both. There's allegory and there's truth and I start everything with the truth, but some songs are certainly more social in nature. A song like "Giving It All Away" is a song about people just joining the rat race and sort of forgetting what they started out believing and sort of caving in to that. Obviously, I haven't lived that because here I am, doing what I do, and I never did that, which I'm happy about, but I know that a lot of people do it, so is that experience? No, but it is truth. So I think when you're a songwriter, for me anyway, it all comes from the heart.

Did [your daughter] change your outlook when you were recording the album?

D: No. When we recorded the album, Maddy was already born. I certainly think all the clichés about parenthood are true for me, like, once you're a parent, if you're a good parent, all the other things in the world don't mean anything. If I had to choose, if God came down and said, "You have to choose between your guitar and singing and your child," I'd fucking smash that guitar and spit on it and never make another song again for the rest of my life. It would mean nothing to me because the baby means so much to me, so all the truisms, you know, you'd step in front of a truck for her, you'd do whatever, it's all true. That kind of is weird.

[So] is punk maturing or is just that the people who got into it when they were 18 or 20, like yourself, are getting to the point that it's just time to start doing that?

D: I think it's more that. I mean, if you're a musician, that's what you do but it doesn't mean that's all you do. You fall in love and you get married and have babies if you want. It's just something that comes and it's a beautiful, fucking great, cool experience.

Back to the album, I have two copies and I'm going to buy the vinyl when it comes out.

D: Yeah, and you know what I'm really proud of also is that a lot of people thought "Oh, they put all the throwaways on there," and that's not the case. The songs on Side 4, we had some big arguments with our producers actually over what should go on it, because obviously our producers want their favorite songs to go on the CD so everyone will hear them and there's some really good ones. We did an acoustic cover of "Going Underground," which I'm really proud of and we also did another acoustic song called "Green Hills of Virginia" which I really love too.

Did you do anything else on the vinyl, like a gatefold sleeve?

D: Yeah, it's a double gatefold sleeve. We didn't do colored vinyl and we did it on purpose because that's kind of like a funny, punk rock thing to do, but the classic double albums, you know, "Frampton Comes Alive," "London Calling," whatever you want to say, they're all just black. Vinyl's black so it's black.

I miss vinyl even if it pops and hisses and skips; there's just more character to it.

D: Yeah, and there's also a personal involvement. You can't push a remote control and hit it like you do with a CD. You can't push shuffle and have 16 songs just play in a row. You have to get up, put the arm on the thing, put the needle on the vinyl, and when it's done it lifts up and you have to go over and turn it over. It just becomes more personal. You become a little bit more involved in the experience. You really live that.

On one of the old albums, you sang, "Most of my words are social." Would you say this album is more social or personal?

D: I'd say it's a typical Down By Law album in that it's probably both. A lot of our social songs, I always kind of hated bands like Crass that were just so blunt in how they phrased things. I mean, there's definitely a use for it, but I always liked the wittier side of bands like D.O.A. or the Dead Kennedys who were kind of witty about it, like "Fucked Up Ronnie" by D.O.A. or "Let's Lynch the Landlords" by the Dead Kennedys. I thought those were great songs. For me, I come at it from a different perspective, probably because I'm not a native Californian, I'm

I had so much fun fucking being there. It's kind of weird.

What can we do to make the scene better?

Dave: Quit thinking of it in terms of a scene. It's all personal to me. Find a band you like, go see a show. If you like the band, act like an asshole and make sure they know you like them. If you like what you're seeing, tell somebody. Put it in print. If you like a band, put out a record. The only way you're going to make it better is taking what you like about what's in punk rock and telling somebody else about it. Put it out, fucking write, do something. Tell somebody that you like it, bring your friends to a punk rock show and if they don't understand why you like it, fucking don't talk to them anymore. It's really fucking cool right now. We've got psychobilly bands, old style punk rock bands and new school punk rock bands, bands like the Neighbors who San Diego has needed for years. Unfortunately, the Neighbors' message gets lost in the fucking swarms of Blink-182 shirts who like fart songs. We need a band like the Neighbors. That's what I like about punk. That's positive.

Tim Barry (Avail)

What's good about punk?

Tim: I think one of the most important things that's good about punk is it's a great outlet for expressing things, period, whether it's through punk art, zines, music or dialogue in Maximum Rockroll or doing a fanzine or doing interviews. I think it's great that the bands that you really look up to, the people are generally pretty damn approachable, whereas if you wanted to meet Mariah Carey, it would be absolutely impossible, but if you wanted to meet or correspond with someone like Ian Mackaye, there's a huge chance you'd be able to do it. One of the greatest things about punk is allowing people to open up as a person at young ages. A lot of people obviously get into punk rock when they're young and it turns them on to a whole new world, a whole new underground. If I look at it again from a personal perspective, I don't think I would be as empathetic to the problems of the world and so on if I didn't get into punk rock music. Punk rock music turned a lot of people that I'm close to into politically active people and not apathetic pieces of shit sitting around, watching TV, which is not a bad thing, but I think that's one of the most positive things, that it could be personally revolutionary as opposed to the punk movement being revolutionary as a whole and open people up. People tend to say in interviews a lot, "Do you think the punk movement is revolutionary? Do you think it will have some impact in the world?" I always say that it already has an impact because it influences people. It's a crock of shit that a bunch of punk rockers are going to take over the government and proclaim anarchy and shit like that, and people really get distressed when I say that. They say that I'm being cranky and jaded or whatever. I think that's an absolutely realistic statement and I think it hurts people's feelings because it's the truth, but they don't understand the good in what I'm saying. It's changed me, it sounds like it's changed you and it's changed most of the people I'm surrounded by. As I said, these are really active people today, like my friend Chris who I used to do a record label with is now a union organizer in Las Vegas and he's big-time. He works with people, he works for people. It's great. My friend Adam Thompson, who also roadies with us, is an amazing intellectual. He's a great writer, he works with Earth First!, he has a show on Free Radio Berkeley. All these amazing and inspiring people who really influence other people, non-punks too, and where did it all stem from? The punk movement. They're beautiful people. Now, they're not going to go and take over the White House or anything like that, but they're going to continue to influence people until the day they die and maybe, in the future, those people that have been influenced by them are going to keep it snowballing and maybe things will get, how we feel, in our eyes, a little bit better in the future.

"i see a lot of problems with
the way people act everywhere."

larry livermore

know about you but I love it when I go to shows and there is a distributor there. I usually find something I want. If you get lucky and find someone who will take on your release to sell to stores, it will most likely be on consignment until it sells well. It's good to know how much of a mark-up they have. Mark ups for distribution range anywhere from 15 to 25%. A good thing to do is make a poster or flier for every few releases that might be able to be hung in the windows of the stores the distributor deals with.

Now, legal bullshit. When you sell your stuff, you do not have to pay taxes. Your release (since you put it out yourself) is considered personal property and cannot be taxed. When using pictures or artwork, be careful not to get sued. There are lots of punk zines out there that you can snake pictures from. Just call them or write them and they will most likely not have a problem with it.

I sent stuff out to be copyrighted once and they sent me back a letter saying if you have sold your stuff, it is automatically copyrighted. If this is true or not, that's what they told me. I've also heard a rumor that if you mail your release to yourself before you sell any that you are copyrighted, as long as you do not open the package. It might not be true, but it doesn't hurt to try.

Finally, I will add some dos and don'ts. We'll start with the dos. Make sure to put an ad in Maximum Rockroll. Although some people don't like this zine, it is by far the most widely read punk publication. If you are being distributed to stores, make sure to write down that stores may go to whichever distributor you deal with. Make your ad cool. Make it grab someone's attention. There are two billion other ads in there, so make yours stick out. Another do is to send, send, send! Send it to distributors, labels doing comps, radio stations, zines for review, zines for ads, other bands, etc. So what if only 2% of these people think your band is worth more than 3¢? Connections pay off!

Now for some don'ts. Don't bring your beer drinking pals and girlfriends or boyfriends to the recording studio. Nothing bogs down a session more than spectators. The main reason is spectators need to talk. The more you have, the louder it gets. This is bound to drive the engineer crazy and put a damper on whatever it is he or she is trying to do. Don't send your crap to a distributor and expect them to make miracles happen. Most distributors have tons of bands (that probably blow your band away) to deal with. It is up to you to make the distributor need to reorder. Don't wait for some zine to call you up and want an interview. There are too many bands for this to happen. Since most zines run on contributions, find some idiot that will interview you. Some idiot with zine experience is your best bet. The final don't is do not, under any circumstances, restrict your ideas, artwork or anything else on your release. This is DIY.

Addresses

Subterranean Distribution

PO Box 2530
Berkeley, CA 94702

WINGSPAN PRODUCTIONS (Cassettes)
(619) 474-2877

BILL SMITH CUSTOM RECORDS

127 Penn St.
El Segundo, CA 90245

CUSTOM PRINTING (Tape, vinyl and CD covers)
(619) 275-0293

OPTIMAX DISC INC.

3420 Pomona Blvd.
Pomona, CA 91768
(909) 598-8676

LASER EXPRESS (Transfer art to film for covers)
(619) 694-0204

plates. The plates are what the vinyl is made from. The next pressing (if you get that lucky) will be very cheap because all you have to pay for is the vinyl, so you can get colored vinyl and neat shit like that for pretty cheap. I would also like to suggest you let Bill Smith or whoever else you choose take care of everything (mastering, stickers on the vinyl, etc.). There will be a service charge, but it's worth it. You see, when companies have an account with a certain mastering person or art work person, that account comes first. Your stuff comes last.

Fuck the old shit, you want CDs. Fine. It's understandable. They sell more than most other formats (to a general crowd), they get far more radio play, they are cheaper and easier to send through the mail and they are cheaper than vinyl. That's right folks, why CDs sell for more than vinyl is another corporate scam. Why the indie world follows this trend beats the hell out of me. The place I went was Optimax in Pomona, CA. I don't know if I would go there again. They are very cheap, but they send their stuff to Taiwan. I don't have anything against Taiwan, but more likely than not, the CDs are made in a Taiwanese plant that is owned by Americans, meaning you can have American products made at a very low cost. I'm not into supporting that type of exploitation in any way. I surely would have gone elsewhere if I had known the CDs were being made in Taiwan. Anyhow, this place is about 95¢ a CD. That includes a one color printing of the text on each CD. If you want them to insert all the booklets, shrink-wrap them and what not, it costs more. Without recording costs, my band's CD came out to about \$1.10 each. Remember, UPS costs money. Usually, the minimum order will be 1,000 CDs.

So what about the art work? Well, since you are putting this out yourself, put whatever the fuck you want on it. The trivial part is how deluxe you want it to look. If you're cool with Xerox copies, then all you need is a ruler, glue, scissors, art and a little time. If you want to beat out the corporates, you will be heading in a whole other direction. There is nothing wrong with making your product look professional, but professional or not, include easily readable lyrics. Bands that don't include lyrics are weak. No excuses here. Even if your lyrics are dumber than dirt, put them in there. Don't be weak. My impression of bands that don't include lyrics is this - they have nothing of importance to say. Therefore, the band is worthless. What is the point of putting your shit out and not having your ideas out there as well? I guess that's where love song bands come into play.

Back to the professional look. Either you or a friend can draw really cool shit, or you or a friend are a computer wizard with rad equipment. You take your final artwork (measure a CD cover to get it right, nerd) to a place where they can make it into film. The film then goes to whichever printing shop you decide to go with to make covers.

For cassettes, expect to wait about two weeks or less for their completion. For vinyl or CD, expect two months or less. Also, make sure to listen to the sample that is sent to you. Don't be an idiot and rush it.

For those of you who wish to get your music out there, here are some steps. Your first step is to go out and purchase Book Your Own Fuckin' Life. This has listings of endless references all over the world. For radio stations, don't bother sending out tapes. They will not get played. If a certain DJ has a demo show then you're in luck, but otherwise, you're wasting your time and money. When you send your stuff out, address it to the specific DJ that does the show specific to your type of music. If you aren't sure who this is, you can write what type of music it is. For example, at the bottom of the address, you could put "ATTENTION: PUNK ROCK." If the station might play your stuff in a regular rotation and not just on a specialty show, then address it to MUSIC DIRECTOR. Some people put in a stamp and ask for a playlist to see if they have been played. Few stations write back, but it is cool when they do.

As far as distribution goes, us DIY people are a little fucked. Most distributors only take on labels which have four or five releases. You may get lucky though. There are ways around this. The most effective way I have found to get on a person's mailing list is to write a distributor in Book Your Own Fuckin' Life and see if they would be interested in a sample. You can send out a few songs on a tape (lyrics included) or the whole release. Ask where they distribute to. They may only do mail-order. If they only do mailorder, then a good suggestion would be to deal with the mail order distributors that run ads in Maximum Rockroll often. Some mail order distributors also sell stuff at shows. This is good. This is where you can help out the whole scene and maybe make a buck or two. Let me clarify.

A lot of these small distributors like to trade, that is, 10 releases for 10 of your releases. The beauty of this is you usually will not have to trade for 10 of the same releases. They sell your stuff through mailorder and at shows, and you sell their stuff at shows. I don't

Ian MacKaye (Fugazi)

Do you think there's anything wrong with punk?

Ian: I think all these questions would be easier to answer if you could actually define punk rock. Certainly, in some aspects I can think of a lot of things that could be fixed, but what I think of as punk rock is still quite perfect. I don't think that what I think is punk rock is probably what anybody else thinks it is so it doesn't make any difference. The beauty of punk rock was always that it was just a term. It has regional definitions and even within regions, one person can say punk rock and get one picture. It's a secret language, frankly. You can say it to one person and they get one idea and you say it to another person and they get a totally different idea from the same words. It's really just a secret language and people who know, know, and people who don't, don't. When you talk about punk rock, what are you talking about? People say to me that Fugazi is hardly a punk band, but in my mind, we are a punk band. In a lot of ways, we're way fucking more punk than most other bands but primarily because I don't think we stick to any kind of set definition which always struck me as the first partide of punk, not to follow the rules.

What's good about punk rock?

Ian: For me, what was good about punk rock and what continues to be good about punk rock was that the music was a currency that a lot of people exchanged, and those people were able to be exposed to radically different ideas about, obviously, music, but also about philosophy, lifestyles, sexuality, theology, everything. Political aspects of life. For me, at least, it opened up an entire universe of different opinions that shared one thing which was that they were not part of the mainstream. When I was in high school, I was really upset about the idea that you just got out of high school and that's it, just jump on the machine. I just couldn't believe that there wasn't something else in the world that didn't offer other kinds of options. When I got involved with punk rock, I discovered that it was, but I didn't see it because it was underground. That's where most good things always exist, underground.

Do you see any problems with the way people act at shows?

Ian: Well, there's never been a shortage of assholes. I would say the last couple of tours we were on were actually some of the best as far as crowds being nice. In the beginning, we had way more problems and it was way more confrontational. I remember when we first started playing as Fugazi that people could not believe that I was saying anything to them about their behavior. They thought, "You're a fucking fascist, or whatever. You can't say stuff from the stage," but that's because they've forgotten something. They forgot that I'm a human being and I'm just in the room like them. People at that point had reestablished this wall between the audience and the band, but from my point of view, that was exactly what we were trying to defeat in the first place, and if I'm in a room and I'm seeing people doing things that I think are fucked, I'm definitely going to say "That's fucked." What was funny to me was that if they think that was bad, they should have seen Minor Threat and the earlier bands because back then, if somebody in the band saw someone doing something fucked, they probably would just jump out and beat the fuck out of them. It was a much more interactive thing at those times and I would say that as bad as things have been and as stupid as some of the crowds may be now, I certainly saw way more fights and way more crazy shit in the early shows but I think that's also because at the beginnings of things, there's a lot more fire and brimstone. It was a violent beginning. It's like a volcano or something. It was a really major eruption and there was a lot more aggression whereas now it seems like if people want to be aggressive, they join one kind of group of people. There's the aggressive kind of clothing you can wear and then you can get into fights. Then other people aren't into that so they have a different kind of clothing or whatever. It's a lot more segmented whereas back then I think everyone was going crazy. Again, I'm not saying it was better. It just strikes me as interesting when people say, "Crowds, they're so stupid now." I don't think they're so stupid. It's harder for them to digest things because they have such a past already to base it against. When I first saw the Bad Brains or the Cramps or whatever, I had nothing to weigh it against at all except for Led Zeppelin and Ted Nugent and Seals and Crofts. I had no idea who the Stooges were or the Velvet Underground or anything. All I knew was really what Americans were getting back then which was a pretty steady diet of Top 40 rock 'n' roll and disco stuff, so from my point of view, seeing those bands was completely fresh out of the oven. I had no fucking clue what to make of it and I think now it's a really different thing. It's been so established and people have this

sense, like, "Oh yeah, there have been so many bands for 15 or 20 years now." There's a context which is really different. The context is a lot more dense now than it was at the beginning. I guess the context when I first started going to shows, these bands were just completely revolutionary. I couldn't compare them with anything. Obviously, the more I got involved, the more I learned about the past underground which has been going on for quite a

Brett Martin

Do you think there's anything wrong with punk?

Brett: Yeah, it shouldn't take itself so seriously. I guess punk in today's market is very defined, it's very clique-y. You have to be a certain way, uphold a certain image and I think kids should do what they want which is the essence of the punk spirit, like no defined terms of how you live your life, or what you like or eat or blah blah blah. That crapola. There's emo-core, there's hardcore, meta-core. There are various labels that are surrounded with this, like you have Victory. You listen to Victory, you know what you're going to get. It's lame because you have such a defined existence trying to live up to these terms that are premediated to you by these fucking douchebags. Does that make any sense? I don't know if I'm really saying anything or not. It's weird. I was thinking about it the other day and I don't even know what punk rock is anymore. Who knows? To me, it's loud music, having fun and doing what you want to do.

Russ Rankin

What's good about punk?

Russ: I still believe, like I did when I first got into it, it's the one thing I do in my life that still moves me and I can feel passionate about and makes me feel like I'm alive and doing something. It's an outlet and a lifestyle. It's an attitude. I would be lost if I didn't have it. It's made all the difference to me and I feel like one of the reasons I enjoy being in a band now is it's an opportunity to give back what was given to me when I was younger and feeling alienated and hating everybody and not feeling like I belonged anywhere, offering to younger people now the chance to be given what I got, to have some valid form of music or a lifestyle or something people can grasp on to. I think that's really important.

Dave Smalley

How have you seen punk rock change since you became involved with it?

Dave: I guess the obvious one that everyone can see, well, I guess people who have been around for a little while, is it's so much bigger now than it was then. You can really say it's grown exponentially almost. In the early days, you'd play a show in front of 50 of your friends in a tent, dark, crumbly place that you probably were playing illegally or you paid somebody off and it was a whole different way of life. It really was a way of life then. Now, you've got bands, besides the obvious ones like Green Day or Offspring, you've got a lot of bands who are living as musicians. Down By Law included, having enough success throughout the world, making good records hopefully, where it's actually a life and a form of art conveyed to far more people than ever was thought of in the early days. So I suppose size is the biggest difference I've seen. Epitaph is a mirror of that as well. Epitaph started with Brett and a loan from his dad and then Jay, the bass player, joined and they were packing boxes together. Now it's this phenomenally successful, still independent but really successful, label and that's a mirror example of a microcosm of punk rock in general.

Is it better now or worse than when you got involved?

Dave: I think it's better. I mean, I loved those early days and I will always remember them with great fondness and when I write my memoirs, which will happen someday, I will definitely spend many pages describing those days so people can know what they were like because people need to know what they were like. It really was a special, special time, but it's better now because bands like us can make really good records the way we want to make them and our fans can get them and we can have a real communication with them that was never possible before. It was far more local before. If you got out of Virginia, like for Dag Nasty, it was a big deal to go on a tour then. Now, we can go on a tour whenever we want really, or not, as we choose. We have far more options and choice and obviously a fan base that is very

How to DIY

Doing It Yourself

By Kenny Leek

So, you want to put out your own music, eh? Pat yourself on the back for taking the initiative. Next, prepare yourself for a big pain in the ass. Be patient because it will be worth it. I play in a band that has released all of its music on all formats - cassette, vinyl and CD. I will give you my best advice. If it fails, sorry. There will be some addresses and/or phone numbers of places I've had success with at the end.

First off, you need to get your butt into a studio. The best way to do this is to listen to a band's stuff that is similar to yours and see if you like the recording. Try to find an engineer that is familiar with recording the type of stuff you do. Studios can run anywhere from \$15 and hour to \$45. Usually, the more it costs, the better they do, but remember, you can have a pro who has produced a million glam bands but is clueless with hardcore. If you are just doing a four track recording and a buddy is hooking you up for free, then cool, but it usually takes a knowledgeable person to make a four track sound good. Be very practiced. For me, the studio is a very different environment and fuckups tend to occur more than usual.

Most likely, you will be mixing your stuff down onto a DAT tape. Make sure to have one with you. They run about \$10 or \$15 and you can get them at any Tower or other corporate music store. The less time on the tape, the better. In other words, if you have the choice of getting a 20 minute DAT or a 160 minute DAT, get the 20 (unless you plan to record more than that). Also be prepared to buy the reel (recording tape) that you will be recording onto. Ask the studio that you will be dealing with where they get theirs. They might have used ones they will cut you a deal on. I'm pretty sure Guitar Center carries reels. These can cost anywhere from \$50 to \$150 per fifteen minute reel. You might find a bargain, but be cautious not to get dicked.

OK, you have your finished DAT. Now what? Well, what do you want to put it out on? We'll start with cassettes. Cassettes are always cool because you can usually order 100 and still get a discount. You see, the more you get, the cheaper it costs, but not by a massive amount, so why am I mentioning this? You have to know you will most likely not make any money or even your money back unless you are very popular in your area or elsewhere. One of the big mistakes I made was to put a bunch of songs on the tape. I should have only put a maximum of six songs on there. If the tape is not a demo and is a real release, then put all your tunes on, it just helps for the if and when time of putting out vinyl or a CD because you have more unreleased material. This will also come in handy if you run into someone who is putting out a comp. Tapes run under a dollar each usually. Then it depends on if you want your text printed directly on the cassette, or on paper to put on the cassette, or no text at all. So you have the cash to go for vinyl? Fuck yes! Vinyl rules. If you play punk, hardcore, emo, etc., you're in luck. Your audience is more prone to actually want a copy. Vinyl or CDs are superior to cassettes because you have a chance at getting college or community radio airplay. Vinyl does have a drawback as far as the younger crowd goes because they don't know what vinyl is. We have had many kids ask us what a "7" is (my cock, or my enlarged clitoris, is always a good answer). We have even had a few kids ask us if they were mini-laser discs.

The person who I have dealt with and did me right is Bill Smith Custom Records.

There are a few things you must have ready to send him to get started:

1. Art work for the middle of the 7, 10 or 12" itself. When you get in touch with the record manufacturer of your choice, they will most likely tell you what size it should be.
2. At least half the money of the total cost. Different companies have different policies, so it will vary.
3. A code for them to identify the record by. This code will be scratched into the vinyl on the part where the record ends. They will let you know how they want it. This is so they can keep track of your shit and which side is which.
4. The DAT. Obviously, you must make sure to specify which songs go on which side. 6 1/2 minutes a side is usually the maximum amount.

I would like to suggest you order the minimum amount of pressings possible because the first pressing will be close to two times the amount it costs for a second pressing. Let me clarify. When you get a record made, they have to master it and make what they call

Eric Davidson

How have you seen punk rock change since you became involved with it?

Eric: I was sitting at a bar the other night and somebody said "What kind of music do they play?" and the guy's like "Oh, you know, alternative." To me, it's more rock. Alanis Morissette still uses guitars and drums and she screams, like Robert Plant did, you know? I think people aren't used to the fact that, since Top 40 radio isn't really rock-oriented anymore, it's more dance and rap, these are new rock bands but, at least for a while, they aren't really Top 40. They're Top 50 or maybe Top 100 or whatever and they're new rock bands. I think people worry so much, like "This is alternative and it's different and it's crazy," and it's because things change and people's attitudes change. They weren't calling Led Zeppelin an alternative to Little Richard in 1970. It's more of this music and it's sellable. It's still all crap. I mean, Alanis Morissette and Stone Temple Pilots and Pearl Jam, they all sound like Boston to me anyway, so I don't even understand why people even worry about all of that. They're just new bands. Green Day was poppy from the beginning, it doesn't really surprise me that eventually they would sell. It's just that most punk bands break up. Most bands become successful because they lasted more than three years and had some amount of marketability or were actually a good band in some way. Most punk bands break up after an album so that's why they remain cult bands and never sell anything. ... It seems a lot of zines and a lot of fans of independent rock and punk rock worry way too much about the mainstream. Maybe you should let it fuck off and let it be boring like it always has been and let it sell to who it wants to sell to. If you don't like Green Day anymore, if you honestly don't like the music, there are more than enough bands around to listen to, you have to search it out.

Is it better now or worse than when you got involved?

Eric: To me, the political or philosophical end of punk rock is trying to live a different lifestyle. Don't follow what everybody else does, don't follow what you're supposed to do in life and try not to be wasteful and have fun. Use the energy you have and don't fucking waste your youth because that's what punk rock was always about for me.

What's good about punk?

Eric: I think what's good about punk is musically sucking out all the bloated shit that I hated about my brother's records when I was growing up. My older brother's records seemed boring and long-winded and didn't connect to me and when you go to a punk club and the band is right there and they're singing about something that pisses them off rather than spangled trolls flying around in the sky or some shit that I was hearing growing up, you can relate to it more and then it makes music a bit demystified and that makes art demystified. You feel like you can be an artist and you don't feel pretentious saying that. I can make something other than an engine in a factory or something like that. I can go out and maybe make a piece of music or try to write a poem or try to do something different and have art be part of your life and not something that hovers above you. Punk is right down to earth and very gritty and angry and more like everyday life and I like that. I think music is probably the most perfect art form because you can't really touch it and grab it. It flies out as sound waves and then it's gone so it's the hardest to really pin down and explain and punk is the hardest and loudest and fastest and angriest so I like that.

How have you seen the crowds and people at shows change?

Eric: You read a lot of zines and kids have a two or three sentence paragraph about what punk is and it's like "Wait a minute." I would like to think it's a little deeper than that. You don't have to be fucking T.S. Eliot about it and spend 40 years trying to write three different poems on it or something, but you should think a little more about it and realize there's a big fucking world out there and lots of people with different opinions on it.

"don't fucking waste your youth ..." eric davidson

loyal to us and that we believe in too. I think it's better. I don't actually know if better or worse is the term, but it's certainly a lot nicer for a lot of things about the whole process of getting your music out there as a musician. It's easier now.

Do you think there's anything wrong with punk?

Dave: Yeah, kids who don't know Minor Threat or Dag Nasty are what's wrong with punk, kids who have no roots. Kids who don't know who Lou Reed is. That's what's really wrong with punk. People who have no history, people who pick up a Green Day record, which is fine, everybody has to start somewhere, there's no problem with that, but if kids listen to Green Day and Bad Religion, who I love, and they don't realize where those influences come from for those bands and they don't realize there's this whole glorious history of rock 'n' roll and yes, it's called punk rock, don't forget. It's not called hardcore, it's called punk rock. The element there is rock and it does go back all the way to Chuck Berry saying "Fuck you whitey, I'm going to play what I want to play." And Elvis really, too, Elvis saying, "Well, I don't care, I'm going to swivel my hips." That's all really part of rock 'n' roll history and rock 'n' roll in and of itself has an element of punkness through it, right from the beginning. So I have a problem with kids who don't know their history and don't care enough about it to find out because then they're going to be the first ones to be playing their Journey records or whatever the equivalent of Journey is when they turn 40. They're going to be the ones buying Phil Collins records and saying, "Oh yeah, well that was punk and that was then and now I'm old and stupid." I do have a problem with that. I think that's wrong with punk is how many kids view it as a fashion or are into it for the sake of slam dancing and getting out some aggression without realizing what a cool thing they're part of.

What's good about punk?

Dave: I think what's good about punk, continuing from the last one, is its history through until today. If you asked me in general what's good about punk, I'd say the Clash and Bad Religion and Down By Law and all of our fans and friends. Those are all good about punk. If you ask me specifically today what is good about it, I'd say there's a lot of areas we can explore as musicians now that we didn't have before which is really cool and refreshing. Even the nihilism, if there's true nihilism, in punk, that can be really good too, depending on how it's done. I think there's a lot more good about punk than there is bad. Of course I would have to think that considering I'm still writing songs and singing for people, so I really have to believe that or I wouldn't keep doing it.

How have you seen the crowds and people at shows change?

Dave: It goes back to that history question. There are a lot of kids now. When we talk about punk, a lot of kids now don't really fit the description of punk. They listen to punk music but they don't have a punk attitude necessarily. When you talk about multi-national corporations, there are many kids who just don't even conceive of that as being connected with what punk rock is, which of course it is. There are many kids out there who go to shows, just like when I was in 9th grade, I went to see America in concert, the group. They were like a folk group or whatever. I went to see them and it was just a concert and I liked it and then I left and went home and went to sleep and got up and did whatever the next day, went to school. I think there are kids who are like that now and that wasn't the case in the audiences of yesteryear. When you went to a Dag Nasty show, everybody there was passionate and knew they were part of this special musical movement that really stood for great things. I'm not saying that that's changed for most kids, but there are now some who are there because they heard us on the radio or whatever and don't realize what a special thing punk rock is and what it's trying to say and do. I think while the audience has grown, it has taken on a few weekend warriors. Maybe they'll find out about it through becoming weekend warriors. Maybe they'll pick up on what this whole thing is and grow with it.

Do you see any problems with the way people act at shows?

Dave: Usually at Down By Law shows, no. Down By Law fans tend to be really smart and very cool. Yes, they definitely slam and go crazy and there are kids who leave with broken limbs, but it's done in a different spirit. Caroline just said they're more thoughtful and I would say that's true. If somebody gets knocked down at a Down By Law concert, you see people helping them up. If somebody gets knocked down at an Offspring show, they're more likely to get stepped on. To me, things are good for us and our fans at our shows. I have a lot of respect for them and I think they have a lot of respect for us too.

What can we do to make the scene better?

Dave: That is a good question. Well, one thing we can all do is not forget what we're doing

and continue to do the good things that we do. For instance, keep on making Sick To Move. I know it can be a pain sometimes and it can be aggravating and frustrating, but it's also a labor of love, like I said earlier, which reflects itself in the writing and who you interview and how you interview them and that's all good. I think one thing that's important is not to lose your focus and I think the flame is still burning inside of me as it always has been. I'm so glad about that. I've never lost track of what I stand for and what I believe in. I'm proud of that. So I think one thing we can do to make it better is not to make it worse. I suppose another thing is support, really support. Bands you like. It's really easy not to go to shows. It's really easy not to buy a record or to tape it off a friend or something like that but if you like, for instance, Wayne Kramer, I'm picking a name out of a hat of somebody who I like a lot. Wayne Kramer is playing tomorrow night and I'm going to do my best, even with my wife and child here, hopefully I'm going to wait until they go to sleep and then I'm going to go see Wayne Kramer. I really love Wayne Kramer and I think he's great. You can support the people who deserve support. Support them with your record buying, support them with your show attendance, buy a T-shirt and also go up and say, "Hey, how's it going? Great show," or "That record you did really means a lot," or whatever. Talk to them and let them know that what they're doing is valued. I think that's another thing that could be good and helpful.

Matt Wobensmith

Is punk better now or worse than when you got involved?

Matt: Certain things are getting better - mainly, feminism becoming realized in punk; queer participation and co-option of punk; the use of punk's "outsider" identity for people on the fringes to identify with, however surface it may be. Those things are the true personification of what punk is about. On the worse side, punk has gone through an identity crisis, and now that lots of people appreciate its music and style, the remaining holdouts of the punk identity are trying to define themselves by their "politics." For example, militant animal rights, the anti-major label stance, the poverty trip, straight-edge, etc. - all are not inherently bad, but on a larger level represent the surface level fake politics that punk is barely capable of conveying. On an institutionalized level, punk politics are ignorance personified, and embody the racist, sexist, and classist structure that it claims to be different from. Punk ideology works in a make-believe world; it works as entertainment and fantasy. But in reality, it does nothing to solve world problems; it doesn't empower the truly oppressed because it's all about the views of an overprivileged class. Punk rock is not a valid political movement - it's a collection of idealistic and mostly naive people who yearn for more, yet settle for less.

What can we do to make the scene better?

Matt: Destroy it. From the ground up.

Final thoughts? Anything you'd like to add?

Matt: It's 1996. Stop fooling yourselves!! There are people who are invested in feeding you nostalgia when you could be creating and enjoying your own. You are being manipulated! Consistency is overrated. Punk makes you conform big time - it makes you think you have to know all the answers to life at age 18 and then hold on to them forever. You're supposed to brag about how long you've been true to the cause. It's fucked. Listen: change is life. If you haven't changed, then you haven't grown. If your goal is to stay the same, then you're living in a fucking cave. There is a HUGE world out there and you are not a part of it. It's OK to admit you were wrong or naive; reinvent yourself constantly! Most of the people interviewed alongside of me in this zine are fucked. I hate to be read in the context of such stupidity and narrow-mindedness. They don't have anything to say. It's one big in-joke that isn't funny, one without a greater meaning or context in the crazy fucking world we live in. Or rather, the one I live in. If I had to be around these people, I'd have to kill a few of them. You don't control your landlord, or your boss, or your family. If you get involved in a subculture, it'd better be exactly what you want and need. If not, then you look pretty stupid - you chose to be there. If punk sucks, it's not because you suck; it's because you finally woke the fuck up from your dream and decided to get real. Quit bullshitting like it's not true - you can fool everyone else, but look who's the real fool.

John Yates

What's good about punk?

John: There are still a lot of great bands and labels and zines out there that are still committed to a grassroots approach to things, and I think that's always going to be there. It ebbs and flows as far as what the current atmosphere is like. There's always a positive aspect to it that I think will probably be around as long as it's around, but other than that, I don't really know how to answer that question adequately. These days, for the most part, I get very frustrated and very disillusioned with it all. I feel like jacking it in about once every month and that's just increased frustration out of the music scene in general, outside of the commercialization of what is again called punk rock, loosely. It's pathetic. It's a joke. It's about as challenging as my grandmother.

Tim Yohannon

How have you seen punk rock change since you became involved with it?

Tim: Well, it's definitely gone from something people did because they were fans or fanatical or on a quest or because it was the only place they could go to something that some people do because there's money to be made and business to be done. It's changed in those ways. Is it better now or worse than when you got involved?

Tim: I'd say worse. I don't think it's as creative or as much fun because of those reasons and I think it changes a lot of the motivation and a lot of the types of people it attracts.

Do you think there's anything wrong with punk?

Tim: Well, there's lots, but I think that the whole business mentality has taken over and that's primary on my list of what is wrong with it.

What's good about punk?

Tim: There's still bands coming out of the garage that have passion and can make some really great music and they're really fun and there are still a lot of people doing it for independent reasons and so for the same reasons it was always good. It still is good.

How have you seen the crowds and the people at shows change?

Tim: Well, they get younger and younger all the time, that's one thing. I don't know, I think it varies from place to place, what a scene is like or how things change and around here, I guess the main way it's changed is that there's very many sub-scenes. In other words, every different sub-genre has its little scene.

Do you see any problems with the way people act at shows?

Tim: I don't think it's that bad, at least from what I've seen. I mean, there's always jerks and there's always going to be some people that are out to hurt other people but at least around here, generally, it's not bad. It may be bad in other places.

What can we do to make the scene better?

Tim: Well, I think if there was more of a consciousness about punk being something completely independent from corporate and governmental influence, then I think it would be better. I think too many people rationalize bands going to major labels, that kind of thing.

“it's the one thing i do in my life
that still moves me and i can feel
passionate about and makes me feel like i'm alive ...” russ rankin